

TER
ROR
OR



NO. 34
FEB.-MAR.



REPRINT
EDITION

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

IN THIS ISSUE:

E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! BACK AGAIN, I SEE! BACK FOR MORE CHILLS IN TALES FROM THE CRYPT! WELCOME, THEN! WELCOME TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! IT'S YOUR HOST IN HORROR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO CURDLE YOUR BLOOD WITH ANOTHER CREEPS COLLECTORS ITEM! SO COME IN! IN THIS YARN, YOU WILL BE THE MAIN CHARACTER! OH, YOU'D LIKE THAT? WELL, WE'LL SEE! EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS WILL BE SEEN THROUGH YOUR...THE MAIN CHARACTER'S...EYES! READY? THEN START LIVING THE TALE I CALL...

MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL!



YOU OPEN YOUR EYES, AND THE GLARING LIGHT OVERHEAD BLINDS YOU! SUDDENLY YOU REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN UNDER A SWIRLING SEA OF DARKNESS AND HAVE ONLY NOW COME TO THE SURFACE! A GREY HAZE HANGS OVER YOU... BUT SOON, EVEN THAT GLEARS AWAY LIKE COBWEBS BEING SWEEP ASIDE BY A FASTIDIOUSLY WIELDED DUSTER! THINGS COME INTO FOCUS! JELLIED OBJECTS SLOWLY FREEZE INTO SOLIDITY! A FIGURE BENDS OVER YOU, SHIELDING THE OVERHEAD GLARE FROM YOUR LIGHT-SENSITIVE EYES...

CAN YOU...CAN YOU SEE ME?
NOD YOUR HEAD IF YOU CAN!



YOU NOD YOUR HEAD, LOOKING UP AT THE FIGURE BENDING OVER YOU! HIS BEADY LITTLE EYES DANCE BEHIND THICK CRYSTAL-LIKE GLASSES! HE GRINS...

I KNEW IT! I KNEW I COULD DO IT! OH, WE WILL BE FAMOUS, YOU AND I! THE WORLD WILL FLOCK TO SEE US!



YOU LOOK AROUND! YOU ARE IN A SMALL INSTRUMENT-CLUTTERED ROOM! GLASS CABINETS FILLED WITH TEST-TUBES LINE THE WALLS! STRANGE SHAPED MACHINES SURROUND YOU! THE FIGURE STANDING OVER YOU PATS YOUR CHEST REASSURINGLY...

DON'T TRY TO MOVE! JUST LIE THERE! CAN YOU TALK? CAN YOU SAY ANYTHING?



YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH! SOMEWHERE BACK UNDER THAT SEA OF BLACKNESS YOU HAVE JUST RISEN FROM IS THE MEMORY OF SPEECH! YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH, BUT ONLY A CHOKING GURGLE SPILLS OUT...

THAT'S ALL RIGHT! DO NOT WORRY! YOU WILL TALK AGAIN! I WILL TEACH YOU! NOW... REST...



THE FIGURE WITH THE THICK GLASSES TURNS TO GO! HE MOVES THROUGH THE APPARATUS-CROWDED ROOM TO A DOOR AND OPENS IT! HE REACHES FOR A LIGHT SWITCH...

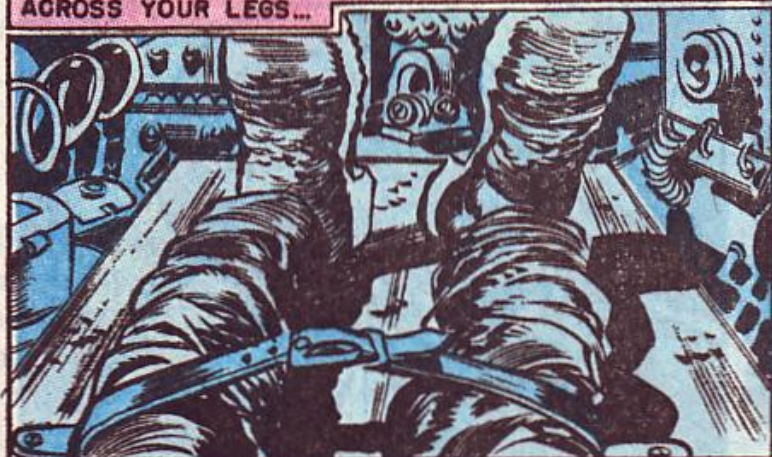
I WILL BE BACK...LATER! I MUST GO OUT FRONT NOW! IT IS TIME TO GIVE ANOTHER SHOW! REST! UNTIL LATER...



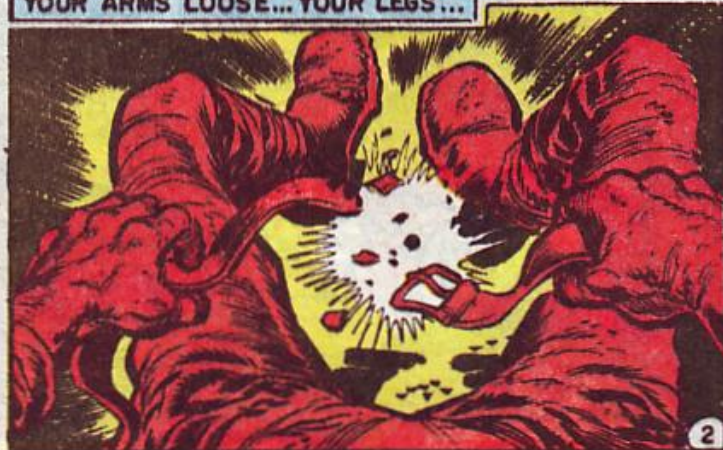
THE ROOM FALLS INTO DARKNESS AND HE GOES OUT! FOR A WHILE YOU JUST LIE THERE, SUCKING IN THE WARM AIR! THEN YOU TRY TO SIT UP! SOMETHING TIGHT ACROSS YOUR CHEST DIGS IN! YOU ARE STRAPPED DOWN...



YOU TRY TO MOVE YOUR ARMS! THE METAL BANDS ACROSS YOUR WRISTS HOLD THEM FAST! YOU CALL OUT, SURPRISED AT THE GARGLED SCREECHINESS OF YOUR OWN VOICE! YOU LOOK DOWN TOWARDS YOUR FEET... AT THE HEAVY SCUFFED SHOES AND THE BANDS ACROSS YOUR LEGS...



HOW DID YOU GET HERE? WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU? WHAT IS THIS FIEND TRYING TO DO TO YOU NOW? A GOLD CHILL OF FEAR SHIVERS OVER YOU! YOU TUG AND STRAIN! THE STRAPS ACROSS YOUR CHEST PART LIKE PAPER AND YOU SIT UP, TEARING YOUR ARMS LOOSE... YOUR LEGS...



YOU CRAWL THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW OF THE ROOM OUT INTO THE NIGHT! THE COOL NIGHT, FILLED WITH A THOUSAND VOICES... A MILLION FLICKERING STARS! TO YOUR RIGHT, LIGHTS GLEAM BEHIND SILHOUETTED BUILDINGS...



PEOPLE...MANY PEOPLE...MOVE IN THE LIGHT...GAYLY LAUGHING... TALKING! SOMEWHERE, A CALLIOPE PLAYS... ITS MUSIC DRIFTING INTO THE DARKNESS! A HARSH VOICE CALLS...LURING...PROMISING...



YOU ARE IN THE REAR ALLEYS OF AN AMUSEMENT PARK! THE LIGHT AND THE LAUGHTER AND THE MUSIC AND THE VOICES SEEM TO DRAW YOU...LIKE A MAGNET! YOU MOVE TOWARD THEM... DOWN BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS...TOWARD THEM...



THEY'RE CLOSER NOW...THE LAUGHING PEOPLE! THEY MOVE PAST THE ALLEY...A SEA OF FACES...A SEA OF SMILES! AND NOW YOU'RE NEARLY THERE...NEARLY OUT OF THE ALLEY...NEARLY AMONG THEM...



THE WOMAN'S EYES BULGE IN HER BLANCHED FACE! SHE STARES AT YOU! HER HYSTERICAL SHRIEK IS LIKE A DOOR SLAMMING OUT THE LAUGHTER...THE VOICES... THE MUSIC! SILENCE FALLS...THICK...SAD SILENCE.



SUDDENLY THE DOOR IS OPENED ONCE MORE! ONLY THIS TIME THERE IS NO LAUGHTER...NO MUSIC! SHOUTS OF DISMAY...SCREAMS OF TERROR POUR IN AT YOU...



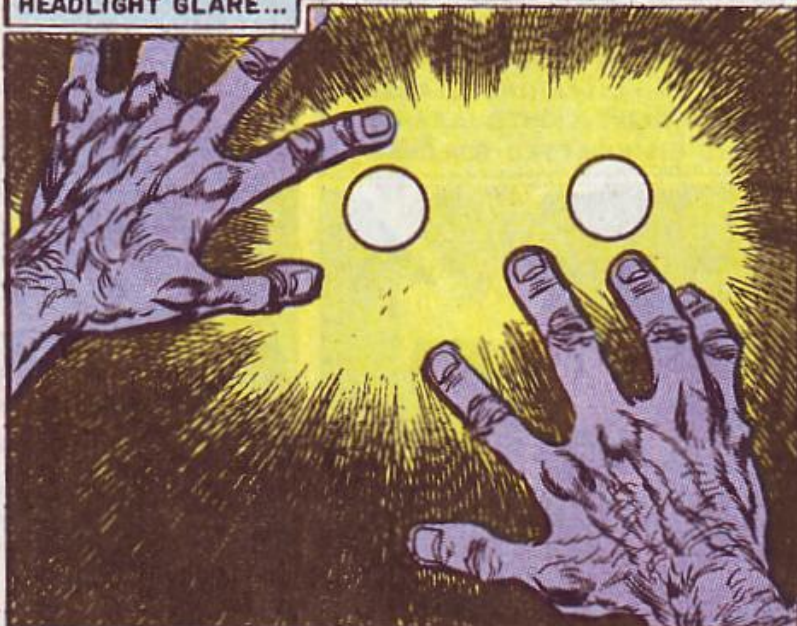
AGAIN, THAT CHILL OF FEAR KNIVES THROUGH YOU! YOU TURN...TURN FROM THE SHOUTS AND THE SCREAMS AND THE BULGING EYES AND BLANCHED FACES... AND YOU RUN...BACK UP THE ALLEY... BACK INTO THE BLACKNESS...



FOOTSTEPS CLATTER AFTER YOU, BUT THEY SOON FADE! THE AMUSEMENT PARK IS VERY FAR AWAY WHEN YOU FINALLY SLOW DOWN TO A WALK! YOU GASP FOR BREATH... AND YOUR HEART POUNDS IN YOUR CHEST LIKE A PISTON! YOU ARE ON A COUNTRY ROAD! THE RIBBON OF CONCRETE WINDS AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS! YOU MOVE ALONG IT...



BEHIND YOU, A GENTLE PURRING GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER! A CAR! YOU TURN...FACING INTO THE ONCOMING HEADLIGHT GLARE...



THE CAR PULLS UP BESIDE YOU! THE DRIVER CALLS TO YOU...

WANT A RIDE INTO TOWN, BUD?



YOU OPEN THE DOOR! FOR A MOMENT HE LOOKS AT YOU, HORRIFIED! THEN HE SCREAMS...



WHY DO THEY SCREAM WHEN THEY SEE YOU? THAT FRIGHTENED, TERRIFYING SCREAMING! YOU WANT TO STOP IT! YOU CLAP YOUR HAND OVER HIS MOUTH! BUT HIS EYES STILL SCREAM...



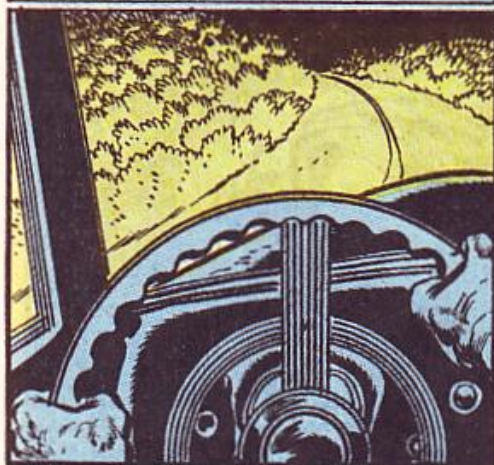
AND THEN HIS EYES GLAZE...AND ROLL...AND HE IS DEAD! HIS BODY GOES LIMP AND YOU LET IT SLIP AWAY FROM YOU LIKE A SOFT SACK! HE FALLS AGAINST THE STEERING WHEEL AND THE HORN BEGINS TO BLOW...A LONG MONOTONOUS MOAN...



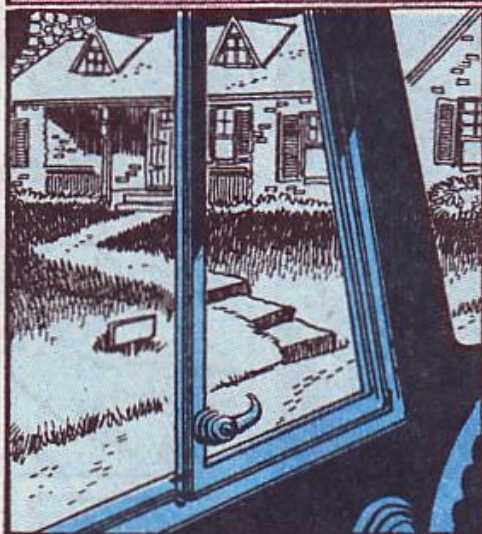
YOU PULL HIM FROM THE CAR AND PUSH HIM TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD...



THE CAR PURRS ALONG THE CONCRETE RIBBON SMOOTHLY! THE ROAD SLIPS FROM THE DARKNESS AHEAD INTO YOUR HEADLIGHT BEAM AND DOWN UNDER THE HUMMING WHEELS! SOON, HOUSES BEGIN TO APPEAR! YOU ARE COMING INTO TOWN! AND THINGS SEEM FAMILIAR TO YOU...



AND THEN YOU SEE IT! THE SMALL WHITE COTTAGE! YOUR FOOT DEPRESSES THE BRAKE PEDAL AUTOMATICALLY AS YOU SWING INTO THE DRIVEWAY! YOU'VE DONE IT A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE! YOU KNOW IT...



YOU SLIP FROM THE CAR AND CROSS THE FRESHLY CUT LAWN! THE NAME ON THE SIGN STICKING AWKWARDLY IN THE SHRUB BED STRIKES A FAMILIAR NOTE! THE NAME! 'STONE'! SUDDENLY YOU REMEMBER! ARTHUR STONE! THAT'S WHO YOU ARE! AND NANCY... YOUR WIFE... SHE'S WAITING FOR YOU...



YOU HAMMER ANXIOUSLY ON THE NEAT CLEAN FRONT DOOR! UPSTAIRS, A LIGHT GOES ON! FOOT-STEPS DESCEND INSIDE... COMING CLOSER... COMING DOWN THE STEPS! THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN...



YES? WHAT IS IT? WHO...

NANCY! EVEN NANCY LOOKS AT YOU LIKE THAT! THOSE EYES... THOSE WIDE, FRIGHTENED, TERRIFIED EYES! AND NOW SHE'S SCREAMING... SCREAMING LIKE THE OTHERS...



AND NOW SHE'S RUNNING UP THE STAIRS, SCREAMING! AND YOU'RE RUNNING AFTER HER... CALLING HER NAME! ONLY IT ISN'T HER NAME THAT ERUPTS FROM YOUR THROAT! IT'S A CHOKING, GARBLED, GUTTERAL SNARL...



KEEP AWAY! OH, LORD... HELP! HELP!

AND NOW SHE'S IN THE BEDROOM, AND YOU'RE MOVING TOWARD HER... PLEADING! BUT THERE'S NO RECOGNITION IN HER EYES... ONLY WILD HYSTERIA! AND SHE'S BACKING AWAY... BACKING TOWARD THE OPEN WINDOW... TOWARD...



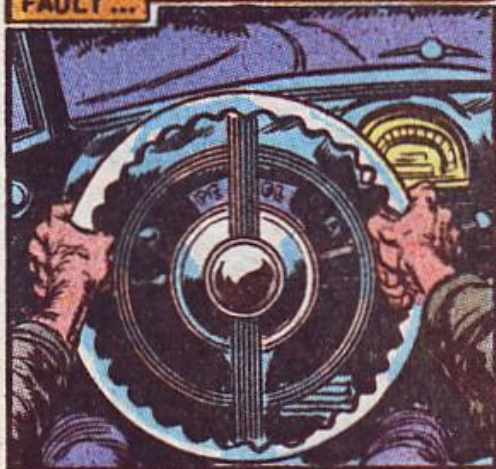
SUDDENLY SHE'S GONE...BACKWARDS...OUT THE WINDOW! AND HER SCREAM IS CUT SHORT BY THE DULL THUD AS HER FLAILING BODY HITS THE BACKYARD PATIO BELOW! YOU RUSH TO THE WINDOW...STARING DOWN AT HER...SOBBING...



WHEN YOU GET TO HER, SHE'S DEAD! HER LIFELESS EYES STILL STARE AT YOU IN GLAZED FEAR...



YOU STUMBLE TO THE CAR AND SPEED BACK TO THE CARNIVAL! THE MAN WITH THE BEADY EYES AND THE THICK GLASSES! HE'S DONE SOMETHING TO YOU! NANCY IS DEAD...AND IT'S HIS FAULT...



AND THEN YOU'RE SLIPPING BACK UP THE AMUSEMENT PARK ALLEY, INTO THE OPEN WINDOW...



YOU! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? THE PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH COPS! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ESCAPED!

YOU'RE MINE! I MADE YOU! I KNEW I COULD DO IT...AND I DID! I TOOK PARTS OF BODIES... AND I PUT THEM TOGETHER! AND I TOOK A BRAIN...A BRAIN OF A MAN WHO DIED OUT THERE... IN MY WAX MUSEUM...A MAN NAMED ARTHUR STONE! HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK... AND I TOOK HIS BRAIN...



I MADE YOU LIVE! I ALWAYS BELIEVED IT WAS POSSIBLE! OUT THERE...IN MY CHAMBER OF HORRORS...THERE'S A TABLEAU OF FRANKENSTEIN...AND HIS MONSTER! YOU'RE MY MONSTER...MY FRANKENSTEIN! WHAT AN EXHIBIT YOU'LL MAKE! I'LL BE FAMOUS! I'LL...I'LL...DON'T... LOOK AT ME...LIKE THAT! NO! EEEEE...



YOUR FINGERS CLOSE ABOUT HIS THROAT, CUTTING OFF HIS SCREAM! AND EVEN AS THE LIFE FADES FROM HIS TWITCHING BODY, YOU'RE STUDYING YOUR NEATLY STITCHED FINGERS... THE SEWN WRISTS... THE SCARRED ARMS...



AND THEN YOU STUMBLE FROM THE ROOM...INTO THE WAX MUSEUM...LEAVING HIS LIFELESS BODY SPRAWLED AMID THE EQUIPMENT...



THEN YOU'RE STARING AT THE TABLEAUS...BLOOD-CURDLING GROUPINGS OF HISTORIC HORROR SCENES...



...AND SUDDENLY YOU SEE IT! THE MOST REVOLTING SCENE OF ALL! A DISGUSTING MONSTER...A CON-GLAMORATION OF STITCHED FLESH...A LEERING REPULSIVE THING...STARING AT YOU...



THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER, NO DOUBT! YOU CLAP YOUR HANDS TO YOUR QUIVERING MOUTH AS THE NAUSEA SWEEPS OVER YOU...



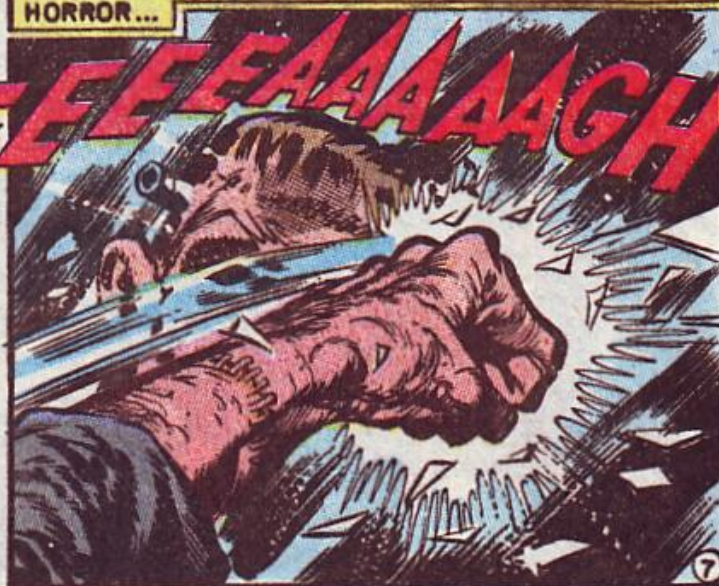
BUT THE MONSTER...THE MONSTER MOVES TOO!



A MIRROR! YOU'RE LOOKING INTO A MIRROR! THAT'S YOU IN THERE! THAT REPULSIVE, STITCHED-FLESHED, HIDEOUS MONSTER BEFORE YOU IS YOUR OWN REFLECTION...



YOU SMASH THE MIRROR INTO A THOUSAND GLIMMERING SHINING PIECES IN SHEER DISGUST AND HORROR...



THEN YOU'RE RUNNING...SCREAM-
ING...OUT IN THE MIDWAY...



EEEE
E!

THERE
HE
GOES!

AFTER
HIM!

THE CLATTER OF FOOTSTEPS IS
RIGHT BEHIND YOU, AS YOU SWING
INTO A DOORWAY...



HE'S GOING
INTO THAT
EXHIBIT...

C'MON!

YOU'RE IN A MAZE... A MAZE OF
SMOOTH-WALLED DARK PASSAGE-
WAYS... TRAPPED...



SUDDENLY, THE PASSAGeways ARE FLOODED IN
BRILLIANT LIGHT! FIGURES LEAP AT YOU FROM ALL
SIDES... HORRIBLE, DISFIGURED, STITCHED-FLESHED
FIGURES...

A HALL OF MIRRORS!



... AND NO MATTER WHICH WAY YOU TURN, YOUR
MADDENING REVOLTING REFLECTION GLARES AT YOU...
SHOUTS AT YOU... SHRIEKS AT YOU IN UTTER REVUL-
SION....



UNTIL...WHEN THEY FIND YOU...THE LIFE LENT TO YOUR MON-
STROUS SKIN-SEWN BODY HAS FADED...ESCAPED FROM EACH
COUNTLESS LONG DEAD SECTION...SUBTRACTED FROM THE SUM-
PRODUCT OF HORROR THAT ADDED UP TO YOU...DRIVEN FROM YOU
BY THE MADNESS OF YOUR OWN IMAGE...

THAT'S HIM!

HE'S
DEAD!

GOOD
LORD!



HEH, HEH! YEP, KIDDIES! AS THEY ALWAYS
SAY...IF LOOKS COULD KILL...! WELL,
IN *THIS* CASE...THEY *DID*! I HOPE YOU
LIKED TAKING THE PART OF THE
MONSTER IN THIS STORY! I *ALSO*
HOPE...HEH, HEH...THAT IT DIDN'T
AFFECT YOU! IF I WERE YOU, I'D
JUST GO ON TO THE VAULT-KEEPER'S

TALE! I WOULDN'T...
ER... LOOK IN THE
MIRROR RIGHT NOW!
YOU MIGHT SEE
SOMETHING YOU'LL
WISH YOU HADN'T!
HEY, WAIT! OKAY!
BUT DON'T SAY I
DIDN'T WARN YOU!
'BYE, NOW', DIG
YOU LATER!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! NOW THAT THE *CRYPT-KEEPER* HAS FINISHED DISHING OUT *HIS* OLD OIL, IT'S *MY* TURN TO ENTERTAIN YOU *FIENDS*! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE *VAULT OF HORROR*! THIS IS YOUR *VAULT-KEEPER*, WITH ANOTHER *HORROR YARN* FROM MY *COLLECTION*! AND THIS ONE IS ABOUT *OIL ... BLACK, GOOEY, UGHEY OIL*! I CALL THIS *BLOOD-CURDLING HAIR-RAISER*...

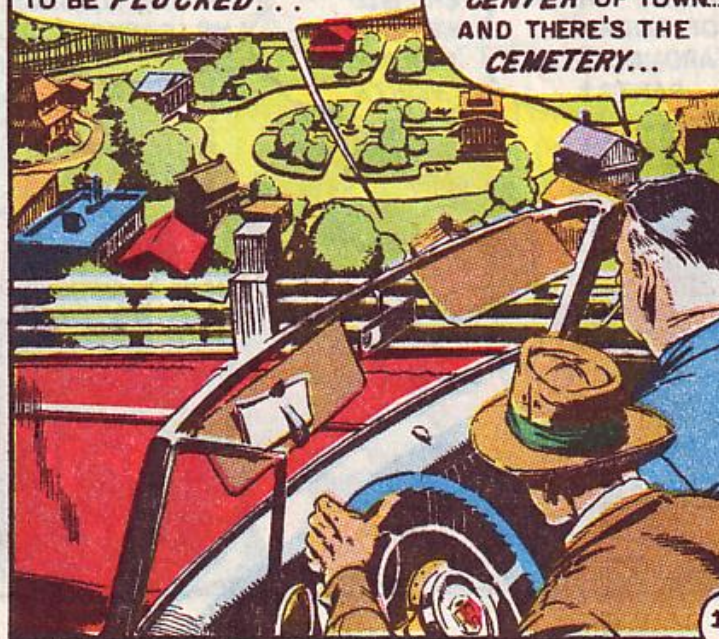
OIL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL!



THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE CAME TO A STOP AT A POINT ON THE HIGHWAY OVERLOOKING THE SPRAWLING MIDWESTERN TOWN! THE TWO MEN IN THE CAR LOOKED DOWN AT THE ROOFTOPS AND SMILED...

WELL, PHIL! THERE SHE IS... WAITING FOR US... LIKE A SITTING DUCK... WAITING TO BE PLUCKED...

THERE'S THE PARK... DOWN THERE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN... AND THERE'S THE CEMETERY...



GEORGE EVANS

THE DRIVER TURNED TO THE ONE WITH THE CIGARETTE BETWEEN HIS LIPS...

LOOK, PHIL! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK WITH THAT BUTT DANGLING FROM YOUR MOUTH? IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

HUH? OH! I'M SORRY, SAM! I FORGOT.



WELL, DON'T FORGET! AFTER ALL! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AN HONEST BUSINESS-MAN! YOU LOOK LIKE A SHARPY WHEN YOU DO THAT!

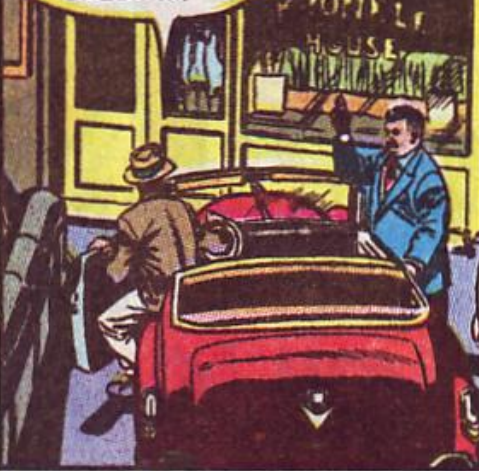
OKAY! OKAY! DON'T GET EXCITED, SAM! I'LL BE CAREFUL!



THE CAR CONTINUED ON DOWN THE HIGHWAY! FINALLY, IT PULLED UP BEFORE THE ONE HOTEL IN TOWN...

ALL RIGHT! ON YOUR TOES! HERE WE GO! I'LL START GETTING THE GRIPS OUT! YOU CHECK IN!

RIGHT, SAM!



THE ONE NAMED SAM STARTED TO UNLOAD THE LUGGAGE FROM THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE WHILE THE OTHER ONE... PHIL... ENTERED THE HOTEL AND CROSSED THE LOBBY TO THE DESK...

HOWDY, STRANGER! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YUH?

I'D LIKE TWO ROOMS... ONE FOR MYSELF AND ONE FOR MY FIELD MAN!



FIELD MAN? WHAT'S THAT?

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. MY NAME IS PHILIP GARSON! OIL'S MY BUSINESS! I LOCATE OIL DEPOSITS FOR BIG OIL COMPANIES! MY FIELD MAN, MR. SIMPSON, HANDLES THE GENERAL SURVEYING OF PROSPECTIVE SITES! WE'RE JUST PASSING THROUGH!



OIL, EH? SIGN HERE! THINKIN' OF LOOKIN' AROUND THESE PARTS?

THANK YOU! ER... NO! WE'RE ON OUR WAY NORTH...

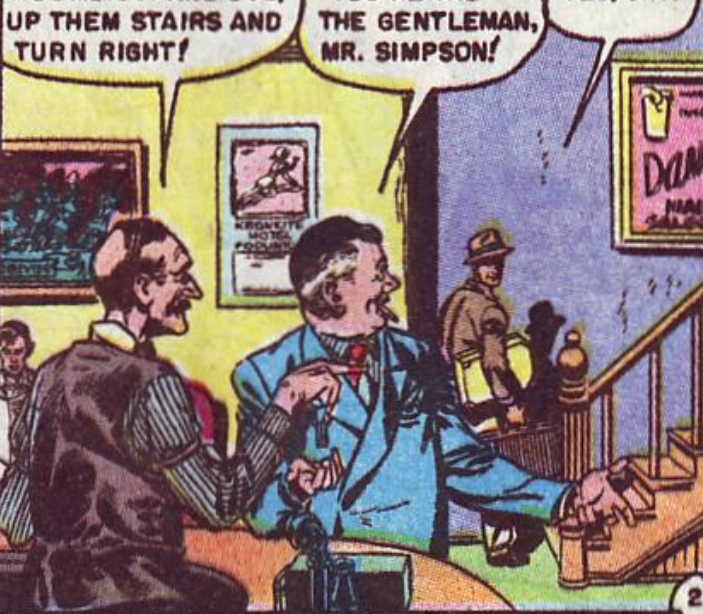
WHERE SHALL I PUT THE LUGGAGE, MR. GARSON!



ROOMS 201 AND 202, UP THEM STAIRS AND TURN RIGHT!

YOU HEARD THE GENTLEMAN, MR. SIMPSON!

YES, SIR!



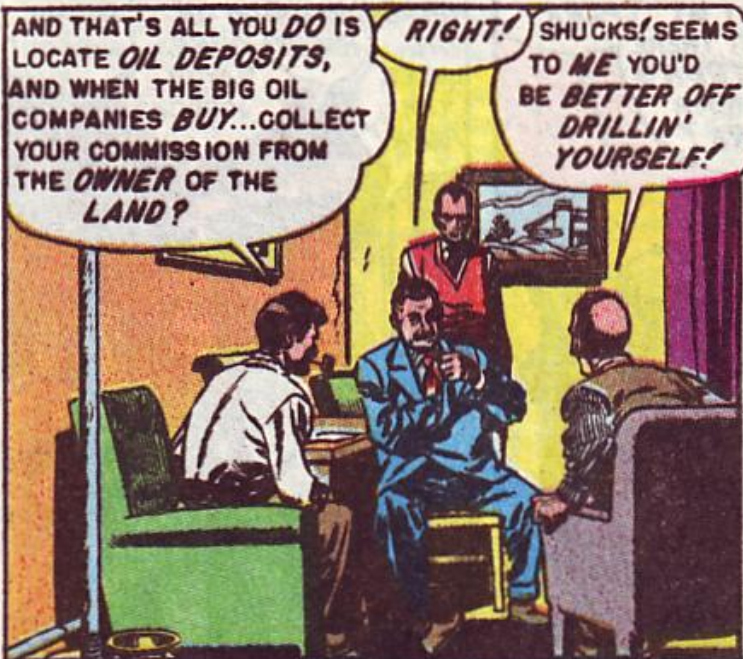
THE MAN BEHIND THE DESK WATCHED AS SAM CARRIED THE LUGGAGE UP THE STAIRS AND PHIL FOLLOWED...



UPSTAIRS...OUT OF EARSHOT... SAM WHISPERED ANGRILY TO PHIL...



LATER...AS NIGHT CAME ON...IN THE HOTEL LOBBY...



SAM FOLLOWED PHIL UP THE STAIRS! BEHIND THEM THE HOTEL LOBBY BUZZED WITH EXCITEMENT...



THEY FOUND OIL...

RIGHT HERE... WHERE?

WHERE?

SEARCH ME...

ANYBODY SEE WHERE THAT SIMPSON FELLER CAME FROM?

UPSTAIRS IN THE ROOM, THE TWO MEN SMILED! PHIL DREW THE SHADE ASIDE AND PEERED OUT...



THERE'S A CROWD GATHERING, SAM! HEH, HEH! DID YOU TAKE CARE OF IT?

NOBODY WAS AROUND! I TOOK CARE OF IT! SHE'LL OOZE FOR A WEEK! NOW GO AHEAD DOWN AND START THE PITCH... BUT DOUSE THE CIGARETTE FIRST!

FIVE MINUTES LATER, PHIL CAME DOWNSTAIRS! THE LOBBY OF THE HOTEL WAS JAMMED WITH TOWNSFOLK...



I'D LIKE TO SEE THE MAYOR!

I... I'M THE MAYOR! JORDON'S MY NAME!



MAYOR JORDON! I HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY MY FIELD MAN THAT THERE IS OIL ON THE TOWN'S PROPERTY... UNDER THE CITY PARK!

THE PARK!



HEY! THERE'S OIL UNDER THE PARK!

THE TOWN'S RICH!

SHALL WE GO ON OVER, MAYOR JORDON?

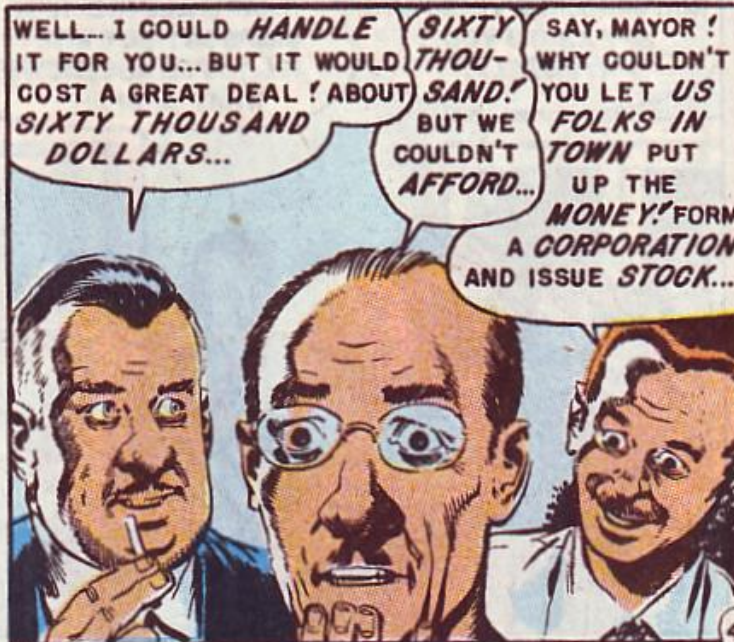
LET'S GO, MR. GARSON!

THE CROWD STOOD AROUND THE BLACK SLICK THAT SEEPED FROM THE GROUND IN THE PARK...



THERE ARE TWO THINGS YOU CAN DO, MAYOR JORDON! YOU CAN TURN THE LAND OVER TO A PRIVATE OIL COMPANY, OR DRILL FOR IT YOURSELVES...

BUT WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT DRILLING FOR OIL!



WELL... I COULD HANDLE IT FOR YOU... BUT IT WOULD COST A GREAT DEAL! ABOUT SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS...

SIXTY THOUSAND! BUT WE COULDN'T AFFORD...

SAY, MAYOR! WHY COULDN'T YOU LET US FOLKS IN TOWN PUT UP THE MONEY! FORM A CORPORATION AND ISSUE STOCK...

MAYOR JORDON TURNED TO THE CROWD...

LATER, IN THE HOTEL ROOM...

WHAT DO YOU SAY, FOLKS? DO WE TURN THE LAND OVER TO A PRIVATE COMPANY, OR RAISE THE MONEY AND DRILL FOR THE OIL OURSELVES...?

OUR-SELVES! YEAH! LET'S KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY!

THEY FELL FOR IT, SAM! THEY'RE GOING TO FORM A CORPORATION AND ISSUE STOCK! I'VE BEEN PUT IN CHARGE OF THE DRILLING!

GOOD! NOW AS SOON AS THEY TURN THE MONEY OVER TO US, WE'LL PULL THE ROUTINE...



A CORPORATION WAS FORMED! STOCK WAS ISSUED! SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM THE TOWNSFOLK POURED IN...

FINALLY...

WELL, MR. GARSON! THE STOCK ISSUE HAS BEEN SOLD... EVERY LAST SHARE! HERE'S A CHECK... FOR SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!

GOOD! NOW, WE CAN START THE DRILLING...

THEN...

HERE'S THE DOUGH, SAM! I JUST CASHED THE CHECK! WHY DON'T WE SKIP TOWN AND FORGET THE CEMETERY ROUTINE...

NO! WE'LL WANT TO WORK THIS DEAL AGAIN! YOU'VE GOT TO BE KEPT IN THE CLEAR! THE CEMETERY ROUTINE STAYS!



AND JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T FORGET TO COME AND DIG ME UP, I'LL HIDE THE DOUGH! NOW GIVE ME ONE OF THOSE PILLS, AND PHONE THE MAYOR! YOU KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

HERE Y'ARE...

S'LONG! DON'T FORGET! DIG ME UP WITHIN SIX HOURS AFTER THEY BURY ME! WE'LL PICK UP THE DOUGH ON THE WAY OUT OF TOWN! AND FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, DITCH THAT CIGARETTE...

HUH! OH...I FORGOT! S'LONG, SAM!



MAYOR JORDON RUSHED TO PHILIP GARSON'S HOTEL ROOM IN ANSWER TO HIS FRANTIC PHONE CALL...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THE OIL DEPOSIT'S A PHONY?

IT'S TRUE! WHEN I FOUND SIMPSON... MY FIELD MAN... GONE, AND THE DRILLING MONEY GONE TOO, I CHECKED!



HE **POURED** OIL INTO THAT SANDY SPOT IN THE PARK! THERE'S **NO OIL UNDER THERE!** WE'VE BEEN **TAKEN! CONNED!**

WE'LL **GET HIM!** HE WON'T GET **FAR!**



JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN, THEY FOUND THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE...

HE'S **DEAD!**

HEART ATTACK, PROBABLY!

DID YOU **FIND THE MONEY?**

NOPE! NOT A DOLLAR!



PHIL GARSON WAS QUESTIONED CAREFULLY...

I... I **TRUSTED HIM!** HE'D BEEN WITH ME ALMOST A YEAR! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! FIRST, **LYING ABOUT THE OIL...** THEN **STEALING THE MONEY...** AND NOW **THIS! DEAD!** I'M... I'M SO SORRY FOR ALL THE FOLKS THAT **TRUSTED ME!**

IT WASN'T **YOUR FAULT!** DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE **DONE** WITH THE MONEY, MR. GARSON?



DIDN'T HE HAVE IT **WITH HIM?**

NO! WE SEARCHED CAREFULLY! HIS CLOTHES... THE CAR! HE PROBABLY HID IT SOMEWHERE PLANNING TO COME BACK AND GET IT! NOW, IT'S LOST... FOR GOOD!



I'D LIKE TO CLAIM HIS **BODY...** YOU KNOW... GIVE HIM A **DECENT BURIAL!**

OF COURSE, MR. GARSON! I'LL GIVE YOU A **RELEASE!**



AND SO, THAT AFTERNOON, SAM SIMPSON WAS BURIED! NATURALLY, PHIL HAD MADE SURE THAT SAM'S 'BODY' WAS NOT EMBALMED...



AND WHEN THE EFFECTS OF THE PILL SAM HAD TAKEN WORE OFF, HE WOKE UP SIX FEET UNDER THE EARTH...

WHAT'S THAT? SOMETHING STICKY...OOZING INTO THE COFFIN! MUDDY WATER! SMELLS FUNNY...



THE WARM THICK LIQUID CONTINUED TO SEEP INTO THE COFFIN AS THE HOURS DRAGGED BY...

PHIL WILL BE HERE SOON! HE'LL DIG ME UP! PHEW! THAT SMELL!



THE OOZE PUDDLED HIGHER AND HIGHER IN THE COFFIN! IT ROSE ABOVE SAM'S EARS...

PHIL! FOR PETE'S SAKE! HURRY...BEFORE I DROWN! WHAT IS THAT ODOR?



SAM WAS PRESSING HIS FACE AGAINST THE SATIN LID OF THE COFFIN, SUCKING AT THE LAST TRACES OF AIR WHEN THE DIGGING SOUNDED FROM ABOVE...

IT'S PHIL! THANK THE LORD! HURRY, PHIL! BOY, WILL I BE GLAD TO SEE YOUR STUPID FACE WITH THAT DANGLING CIGARETTE... AND... AND... NOW I KNOW WHAT THAT STUFF SMELLS LIKE! OH, LORD!



AND AS PHIL LIFTED THE LID OF THE COFFIN, SAM SCREAMED AT HIM...HIS BLACK SHINING FACE RISING FROM THE SURFACE OF THE OOZE-FILLED COFFIN...

IT'S OIL...PHIL!

HUH?



THE CIGARETTE DANGLING FROM PHIL'S MOUTH DROPPED INTO THE THICK BLACK OIL AS HIS JAW FELL OPEN IN ASTONISHMENT! SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A BLINDING WHITE FLASH...



HEH, HEH! YEP! PHIL FORGOT AGAIN! ONLY THIS TIME, SAM BLEW UP! OF COURSE PHIL WENT TO PIECES OVER HIS BAD HABIT, TOO! BUT THE LITTLE TOWN GOT ITS OIL BOOM AFTER ALL! THE SIXTY GRAND SAM HAD HIDDEN WAS NEVER FOUND!

THEY TORE THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE TO BITS LOOKING FOR IT! WANNA BUY A CAR ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN...A BIT AT A TIME? 'BYE, NOW! SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE VAULT OF HORROR!



LOVE STORY



I met Negra in my last year at medical school. She had come to the university that year to study medicine as an exchange student from Mecklenburg, Germany.

Dr. Justin McGill was presenting an exhibit in his field of hemopathy, pertaining to any of the diseases of the blood, and as I was quite interested in this study, I spent much of my free time assisting him in preparing slides of blood smears.

I had just come from the university hospital with a fresh specimen of blood taken from a patient who was a "bleeder", one in whom the constituents of fibrin do not exist in proper proportion or proper quantity, thus preventing a clot to form when bleeding takes place. Many afflicted with this blood deficiency have bled to death from a simple scratch!

Dr. McGill was conducting his hemocytology class when I entered his laboratory. I took a microscope from a wall cabinet and set it up on a table at the back of the room. I placed a few drops of the "bleeder's" non-coagulated blood on a slide and proceeded to study it under high-power.

I raised my head slowly from the eyepiece when a soft voice said in careful, precise English, "May I look at your slide?". It was a girl with raven-black hair and inquisitive dark eyes. Her face was as pale as her neatly starched laboratory frock.

She looked into my microscope. In a few seconds she said, "Hemophilia! Delayed clotting of the blood and consequent difficulty in checking hemorrhage!"

"Right!", I added, surprised at her rapid cell-detection. "It's a congenital condition inherited by males through the mother as a sex-linked character."

"I feel so sorry for the people who are afflicted with it! They can't live a normal life... they have to be so careful!! There are so many strange conditions of the blood which are passed on from generation to generation", she said feebly. I thought she was just another medical student going through the usual stages of text-book hypochondria.

I soon learned that Negra was Dr. McGill's best student. She seemed obsessed with a morbid curiosity about blood. Whenever I worked in the lab, or classified types in the plasma depository, she would come to talk to me.

One day she came into the blood bank, her face more blanched than usual. I told her that she was studying too hard and required more rest. I left her in charge of the bank while I went to the medical building to see a dying friend who was wasting away from no visible disease. Incidentally, this poor fellow was a classmate and an acquaintance of Negra's!

When I came back to relieve Negra, there was a red healthy glow to her face!

A few days later, my moribund friend expired. An autopsy showed a definite pernicious anemia. Half of the blood-content of his body had dried up in the course of a few weeks. Only a month before, he had undergone a complete physical and was found well and robust! As an added shock, I found a shortage of some forty-two pints in the blood bank!!

That night, I took Negra to town to see a movie. We were returning about midnight when my car was stalled by a sudden rain-storm... wet wires! Negra and I sat in the front seat, watching the rain pounding on the hood and windshield. Soon I began to doze off... but I didn't sleep very long! I was jolted upright by long, deep, gurgling, frenzied, inhaling sounds!!

I turned towards Negra. Her lips were bloody and her mouth was stretched over the alabaster-white surface of her writhing right forearm! She was swallowing her own blood as fast as she could draw it into her spastically contracting cheeks. But she could never satiate her lustful thirst for as she grew stronger, she also grew weaker! As she gained blood, she also lost blood!

Now all was clear to me! Negra had inherited Vampirism as an old family trait. I had read of the ancient blood-suckers of Mecklenburg! When the rain stopped, I set my car... and Negra... ablaze. She would find sweet innocent rest at last!

But why hadn't she inflicted her blood-sucking upon me? Could it be that Negra, the reluctant vampire, was in love with me??

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

I CALL THIS NAUSEATING NURSERY NOVELETTE...
ATTACKS OF HORROR!



ONCE UPON A TIME...LONG, LONG AGO... THERE WAS A TINY SEASIDE KINGDOM GOVERNED BY A FAT KING WHO WAS MAD ABOUT MONEY...

ONE THOUSAND... TWO THOUSAND...
THREE THOUSAND... FOUR THOUSAND...
FIVE...

**KING
MONEYMAD!
KING
MONEYMAD!**

CAN'T YOU SEE I'M COUNTING
MY *MONEY*, ROYAL ADVISOR?
I TOLD YOU NEVER TO
INTERRUPT ME WHEN
I'M COUNTING MY MONEY!
NOW I'LL HAVE TO *BEGIN*
ALL OVER AGAIN! ONE
THOUSAND... TWO...

BUT KING MONEYMAD!
I'VE *GOT IT!* I'VE
GOT IT! A WAY FOR
YOU TO GET *MORE*
MONEY!



...THREE THOUSAND...
FOUR...*WHAT?* YOU'VE
THOUGHT OF A WAY
FOR ME TO GET
MORE MONEY, ROYAL
ADVISOR! *HOW?*

TAXES,
KING
MONEYMAD!

TAXES, ROYAL
ADVISOR? WHAT
ARE *TAXES?*

YOU *CHARGE*
PEOPLE A
CERTAIN AMOUNT
OF MONEY *PER*
YEAR FOR
SOMETHING! THAT'S
CALLED A *TAX!*

WELL, *WHAT*
DO YOU *TAX*
PEOPLE
FOR.
ROYAL
ADVISOR?

ANYTHING! YOU
JUST *THINK* OF A
THING AND *TAX*
THEM FOR IT!

THAT'S ALL THERE IS *TO* IT, EH,
ROYAL ADVISOR? JUST *THINK*
OF SOMETHING AND *TAX* THEM
FOR IT, EH? ALL RIGHT! ISSUE
A *DEGREE*, ROYAL ADVISOR...

A *TAX DEGREE,*
EH, KING
MONEYMAD?

A *TAX DEGREE!* YES! *TO*
ALL THE *TITLED* PEOPLE
IN MY KINGDOM... *COUNTS,*
DUKES, LORDS, EARLS, ETC!...
FOR *USING* THEIR *TITLES,* I
TAX THEM *69,000* PIECES
OF GOLD A YEAR!

SORT OF A '*SIR*
TAX', EH, KING
MONEYMAD? *GOOD!*
I WILL ISSUE THE
DEGREE IMMEDIATELY!

AND SO, FAT KING MONEYMAD LEARNED ABOUT TAXES! HIS '*SIR TAX*' WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS! MONEY POURED INTO THE ROYAL TREASURY FROM ANGRY TITLE-HOLDERS ALL OVER THE KINGDOM...

SEVEN THOUSAND... EIGHT
THOUSAND... NINE THOUSAND...
TEN...

KING MONEYMAD!
KING MONEYMAD!

ROYAL ADVISOR! *HOW*
MANY TIMES HAVE I
TOLD YOU NOT TO
INTERRUPT ME WHEN
I'M *COUNTING* MY
MONEY! NOW WHERE
WAS I...?

KING MONEYMAD! *ALL*
TITLEHOLDERS HAVE
PAID THEIR '*SIR TAX*'!
THERE WON'T BE ANY
MORE MONEY COMING
IN! *THINK* OF SOMETHING...

TAKE A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! TO ALL OWNERS OF BOATS! A TAX OF THREE PIECES OF GOLD PER SQUARE YARD OF CANVAS IS HEREBY LEVIED!

'SAILS TAX', EH, KING? GOOD! I'LL ISSUE THE DECREE, IMMEDIATELY!



AND SO THE 'SAILS TAX' WAS LEVIED! IRATE FISHERMEN PROTESTED... BUT TO NO AVAIL...

BUT I HAVE SIXTY SQUARE YARDS OF SAILS! MY FAMILY WILL STARVE!

180 PIECES OF GOLD... OR ELSE...



...AND MONEY POURED INTO THE ROYAL TREASURY...

TWELVE THOUSAND ... THIRTEEN THOUSAND... FOURTEEN...

KING MONEYMAD! KING MONEYMAD!



ROYAL ADVISOR! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU... OH... WHAT'S THE USE? WHAT IS IT NOW?

IT'S THE 'SAILS TAX', KING MONEYMAD! ALL SAILS HAVE BEEN TAXED! NO MORE MONEY WILL BE COMING IN! NOW WHAT?



ARE THOSE GYPSIES STILL WANDERING AROUND THE KINGDOM, ROYAL ADVISOR? THE ONES THAT TELL FORTUNES...

YES, KING MONEYMAD!



TAKE A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! BECAUSE THERE ARE TOO MANY FORTUNE TELLERS IN THE KINGDOM, EACH ONE IS TAXED 100 PIECES OF GOLD...

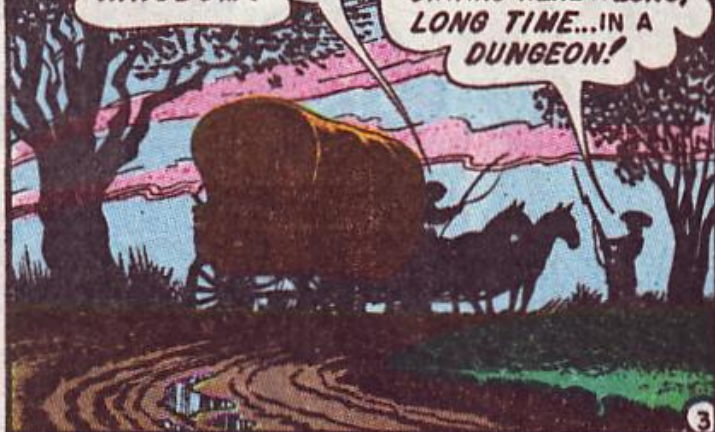
'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX', EH, KING? GOOD! I'LL ISSUE THE DECREE...



AND SO THE 'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX' WAS LEVIED! ANGRY GYPSY FORTUNE TELLERS PROTESTED... BUT TO NO AVAIL...

BUT I WAS JUST ON MY WAY OUT OF THE KINGDOM!

100 PIECES OF GOLD, OR YOU'LL BE STAYING HERE A LONG, LONG TIME... IN A DUNGEON!



KING MONEYMAD'S MADNESS FOR MONEY GREW AND GREW AS MORE AND MORE POURED INTO HIS TREASURY! THE MORE HE GOT, THE MORE HE WANTED...

TAKE A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! ANYONE WHO OWNS A *FISHING ROD* IS TAXED 90 PIECES OF GOLD...

'POLE TAX,' EH, KING...

NOW... KING MONEYMAD'S KINGDOM WAS A *FISHING* KINGDOM! SINCE IT WAS LOCATED BY THE SEA, MANY PEOPLE HAD FISHING RODS! SO, WHEN THE 'POLE TAX' WAS LEVIED...

KING MONEYMAD HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!

NINETY PIECES OF GOLD FOR A *FISHING POLE*...

HE'S TAXING US INTO POVERTY...



BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM WHO OWNED FISHING RODS PAID THEIR 'POLE TAX' ANYWAY...

NOW WHAT?

THE 'POLE TAX' HAS BEEN COMPLETELY COLLECTED! GOT ANY IDEAS?

TAKE A DECREE! TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE *RUGS* IN THEIR HOMES...

'CARPET TAX,' EH?

THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND... THIRTY-SIX THOUSAND... THIRTY-SEVEN...

KING MONEYMAD! KING MONEYMAD!



THE PEOPLE OF KING MONEYMAD'S KINGDOM WERE FURIOUS...

30 PIECES OF GOLD BECAUSE I HAVE THAT *STRAW MAT* ON MY FLOOR...

A *CARPET* IS A *CARPET*! PAY UP OR ELSE...



PRACTICALLY *EVERYONE* HAD AT LEAST A *MAT* ON THEIR FLOOR! THOSE WHO COULDN'T PAY WERE DRAGGED OFF TO PRISON...

DADDY! DADDY!

NO! NO! DON'T TAKE MY HUSBAND AWAY!

YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY THE 'CARPET TAX,' LADY! WHEN IT'S PAID, HE'LL BE RELEASED!



THE MONEY CONTINUED TO POUR INTO KING MONEYMAD'S TREASURY

SIXTY-EIGHT THOUSAND... SIXTY-NINE...

KING MONEYMAD!

ALL RIGHT, ROYAL ADVISOR! WHAT'S THE SAD NEWS?

THE 'CARPET TAX!' IT'S ALL PAID UP!

THEN TAKE THIS DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! A TAX OF 20 PIECES OF GOLD EACH IS HEREBY LEVIED ON EVERY THUMB IN THE LAND...

'THUMB TAX!'

THIS TAX... THE 'THUMB TAX'... WAS THE LAST STRAW! THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN TAXED UNTIL THEY COULD PAY NO MORE...

THEY HAVE NO MORE MONEY, KING MONEYMAD! THEY CANNOT PAY THE 'THUMB TAX'!

IF THEY CAN'T PAY THE 'THUMB TAX'... THEN THEY CAN'T HAVE THEIR THUMBS! TAKE A DECREE!

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

IT SAYS THAT THE 'THUMB TAX' MUST BE PAID, OR THE THUMBS WILL BE REMOVED!

GASP!

THOSE WHO COULD NOT PAY WERE LINED UP OUTSIDE THE PALACE! THE LINE WAS VERY LONG! KING MONEYMAD SAT IN THE PALACE COURTYARD NEXT TO THE AXE-MAN...

ALL RIGHT! BRING THEM IN... ONE AT A TIME...

THE KING SAYS BRING THEM IN... ONE AT A TIME...

THE FIRST MAN WAS DRAGGED TO THE CHOPPING BLOCK...

FOR NOT PAYING YOUR THUMB TAX, YOU MUST LOSE YOUR THUMBS...

NO! MERCY! MERCY!

THE AXEMAN'S AXE FELL! THE MAN SCREAMED...



OUTSIDE THE CASTLE, THE PEOPLE ON LINE STARED AT EACH OTHER IN DISBELIEF...

HE'S REALLY GOING THROUGH WITH IT!

HE'S MAD!



THE LINE BEGAN TO MOVE! THE AXEMAN'S AXE ROSE AND FELL AGAIN AND AGAIN...

FIRST HE TAXED THE NOBILITY! 'SIR TAX' HE CALLED IT! THEN THE 'SAILS TAX'... THEN THE 'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX'... THEN THE 'SIN TAX'... THE 'POLE TAX'... 'THE CARPET TAX'... AND NOW THIS... 'THUMB TAX'!

SOMEBODY OUGHT TO TAX HIM!



THE LINE CONTINUED TO MOVE! THE AXEMAN'S AXE ROSE AND FELL! SCREAMS ECHOED IN THE COURTYARD! OUTSIDE... THE LINE BEGAN TO BABBLE... THEN SHOUT! SUDDENLY...

LET'S GET HIM!

WE'VE BEEN TAXED ENOUGH!

LET'S TAX HIM!



THE CROWD STORMED INTO THE COURTYARD, SEIZING THE KING! SOMEBODY GRABBED THE AXEMAN'S AXE.

STOP THIS! STOP THIS! I AM YOUR KING!

AND YOUR PEOPLE HAVE DECIDED TO TAX YOU... YOUR MAJESTY...



THE CROWD MOVED IN! THE AXE WAS RAISED! THE KING SCREAMED! THE CROWD CHEERED! THE AXE FELL! SOMEBODY BENT AND PICKED IT UP FOR ALL TO SEE... A BAG-LIKE, YELLOWISH, BLOOD-STAINED FORM...

...CORPORATION TAX!



HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S MY GRIM FAIRY TALE FOR THIS ISSUE, KIDDIES! THE PEOPLE SUFFERED KING MONEYMAD'S TAXATION UNTIL THEY COULDN'T STOMACH IT ANY LONGER... AND THEN THEY TOOK KING MONEYMAD'S... STOMACH, THAT IS! GRIM? THAT'S THE IDEA! HEH, HEH! NOW... IF YOU'LL SHIFT YOUR EYES RIGHT... TO THE


OLD WITCH... SHE'LL WIND UP MY MAG WITH A SERVING FROM HER CAULDRON! GET THE BICARB READY! BYE NOW!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! YEP, KIDDIES, IT'S YOUR HOSTESS IN *THE HAUNT OF FEAR*, THE OLD WITCH, STIRRING HER CAULDRON AGAIN, READY TO SERVE YOU ANOTHER HORROR HELPING. THE REEKING RECIPE I'VE COOKED UP THIS TIME WAS FIRST DISHED OUT BY A VERY DEAR FIEND OF MINE, AMERICA'S FOREMOST FANTASY WRITER, **RAY BRADBURY**! SO, TUCK YOUR DROOL CUPS UNDER YOUR CHINS. AND I'LL FEED YOU MY ADAPTATION OF MR. BRADBURY'S...

THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN!



THE TALL DARK YOUNG MAN STOOD QUIETLY, NOT MOVING. AUNT TILDY SHOOK HER HEAD, FUSSING WITH HER KNITTING...

NO! THERE'S NO USE ARGUING. I GOT MY MIND FIXED. YOU RUN ALONG WITH YOUR SILLY WICKER BASKET. LAND, LAND, WHERE'D YOU EVER GET NOTIONS LIKE THAT? YOU JUST SKIT OUT OF HERE AND DON'T BOTHER ME.

THE TALL DARK MAN SAT DOWN. HE JUST SAT THERE, STARING. THE BONE-PORCELAIN, FLOWERED CLOCK ON THE MANTEL CHIMED THREE. OUT IN THE HALL, GROUPED AROUND THE WICKER BASKET, FOUR MEN WAITED, QUIETLY, HARDLY MOVING, AS IF THEY WERE THERE...

NOW ABOUT THAT WICKER BASKET. IT'S PAST SIX FEET LONG, AND BY THE LOOK OF IT, IT AIN'T LAUNDRY. AND THOSE FOUR MEN YOU WALKED IN WITH, YOU DON'T NEED THEM TO CARRY THE BASKET... WHY, IT'S LIGHT AS THISTLES! EH?

THE DARK YOUNG MAN WATCHED AUNT TILDY. SOMETHING IN HIS FACE SUGGESTED THAT THE BASKET WOULDN'T BE SO LIGHT AFTER A WHILE. THERE'D BE SOMETHING IN IT...

NOW WHERE'VE I SEEN A WICKER LIKE THAT BEFORE? SEEMS TO ME... OH! NOW I REMEMBER! IT WAS WHEN MRS. DWYER PASSED AWAY NEXT DOOR.



AUNT TILDY SET HER KNITTING DOWN STERNLY...

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR. I THOUGHT YOU WERE WORKIN', TO SELL ME SOMETHING. WELL YOU JUST SET TILL EMILY COMES HOME. SHE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU. SHE'LL SHOO YOU OUT OF THE PARLOR SO QUICK, IT'LL...



THE DARK MAN LOOKED AT AUNT TILDY AS IF SHE WERE TIRED...

NO! I'M NOT! I'M NOT TIRED! GREAT SONS O' GOSHEN ON THE GILBERRY PIKE. I GOT A HUNDRED COMFORTERS, TWO HUNDRED SWEATERS, AND SIX HUNDRED POT-HOLDERS IN THESE FINGERS, NO MATTER HOW SKINNY THEY ARE. YOU RUN AND COME BACK WHEN THEY'RE DONE... AND MAYBE I'LL TALK TO YOU...



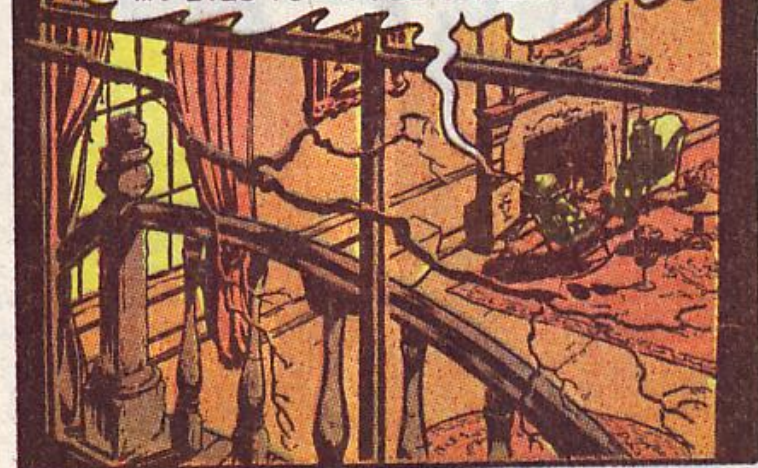
THERE WAS A NOISE. THE MANTEL CLOCK SOUNDED THREE. STRANGE! IT SEEMED TO HER THAT IT HAD CHIMED THREE ONCE BEFORE...

ARE YOU JUST GOIN' TO SIT THERE, YOUNG MAN?



HE WAS...

THEN, YOU WON'T MIND IF I TAKE A NAP. JUST A CAT-NAP. NOW YOU DON'T GET UP OFF THAT CHAIR. YOU SET THERE. YOU SET THERE AND DON'T COME CREEPIN' AROUND ME. JUST GOIN' TO CLOSE MY EYES FOR A WEE SPELL...



SO FEATHERY. SO DROWSY. SO DEEP. UNDER WATER, ALMOST. OH, SO NICE. WHO'S THAT MOVIN' AROUND IN THE DARK WITH MY EYES CLOSED? WHO'S THAT KISSIN' MY CHEEK? YOU, EMILY? NO. GUESS IT WAS MY THOUGHTS. ONLY DREAMIN', DRIFTIN', DRIFTIN' OFF... OFF...



THE CLOCK CHIMED THREE AGAIN. AUNT TILDY SAT UP. THE YOUNG MAN IN THE DARK SUIT STOOD NEAR THE DOOR...

YOU LEAVIN' SO SOON, YOUNG MAN? GOOD THING! EMILY'S COMIN' HOME AND SHE'D FIX YOU. HAD TO GIVE UP, DIDN'T YOU? COULDN'T CONVINCE ME, COULD YOU? WELL, YOUNG MAN, YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER COMIN' BACK TO TRY AGAIN!



THE DARK YOUNG MAN BOWED WITH SLIGHT DIGNITY. HE HAD **NO INTENTION OF COMING BACK... EVER...**

FINE. WHY **YOU** COULDN'T GET ME OUT OF THIS HOUSE. **NOSIRREE!** WHY, I'M GOING TO KNIT IN THIS WINDOW THE **NEXT THOUSAND YEARS**. THEY'LL HAVE TO CHEW THE BOARDS AROUND ME TO... TO... **QUIT LOOKIN' LIKE THE CAT THAT ATE THE BIRD!** GET OUT AND TOTE THAT **FOOL WICKER BOX WITH YOU!**



THE FOUR MEN TREADED HEAVILY OUT THE FRONT DOOR. TILDY STUDIED THE WAY THEY HANDLED THE WICKER. IT WASN'T HEAVY, YET THEY STAGGERED WITH ITS WEIGHT. SHE GLANCED ABOUT CONCERNEDLY...

HERE, NOW! DID YOU STEAL SOME OF MY ANTIQUES? MY BOOKS? NO. THE CLOCKS? NO. WHAT YOU GOT IN THAT WICKER?



THE DARK MAN OFFERED THE LID OF THE WICKER TO AUNT TILDY. IN PANTOMIME HE WONDERED IF SHE'D LIKE TO OPEN IT AND GAZE INSIDE...

CURIOUS? ME? SHAW, NO. GET OUT! GET OUTA HERE! GOODBYE!



THE DOOR SLAMMED. THAT WAS BETTER. DARNED FOOL MEN WITH THEIR MAGGOTY IDEAS...

AH. HERE COMES EMILY. ABOUT TIME. BUT, LAND. SHE LOOKS PALE AND FUNNY TODAY. WALKIN' SO SLOW...



EMILY SHUFFLED INTO THE PARLOR, HEAD DOWN... EMILY. I BEEN

WAITIN' FOR YOU. THERE WAS THE DARDEST FOOL MEN JUST HERE WITH A WICKER. GLAD YOU'RE HOME! EMILY...



EMILY! STOP SCREAMING!



A WHITE-SMOCKED MAN, EVIDENTLY A MORTICIAN, GLANCED UP FROM THE RECENTLY ARRIVED WICKER AS AUNT TILDY STORMED INTO THE MORTUARY...

MADAME! THIS IS NO FIT PLACE FOR A GENTLE-WOMAN!

WELL, GLAD YOU *FEEL* THAT WAY. THEM'S MY SENTIMENTS, EXACTLY. I DON'T WANT ME HERE! I WANT ME HOME! I GOT EMILY TO FEED! SWEATERS TO KNIT! CLOCKS TO WIND...

THE MORTICIAN LOOKED AT HER... THEN AT THE WICKER. HE MOUTHED HIS WORDS WITH APPARENT RELISH, AND A WINNOWING OF HIS KNIVES, TUBES, JARS AND INSTRUMENTS...

MADAME! I HAVE WORK TO DO! A BODY HAS ARRIVED!

YOU LAY SO MUCH AS A CUTICLE ON THAT BODY AND I'LL THRASH YOU...



THE MORTICIAN OPENED THE WICKER LID CASUALLY. THEN, IN A RECURRENT SERIES OF SCRUTINIES, HE REALIZED THAT THE BODY INSIDE WAS... IT SEEMED... COULD IT BE...

EH... THIS LADY, HERE! SHE IS... A... RELATIVE?

NO, YOU FOOL! ME! DO YOU HEAR? ME! I WANT MY BODY BACK!

THE MORTICIAN CONSIDERED THE IDEA. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...

NO! THINGS LIKE THIS DON'T HAPPEN! GEORGE! SHOW HER OUT! GET HELP FROM THE OTHERS! I CAN'T WORK WITH A CRANK PRESENT!



THE FOUR MEN ASSEMBLED AND CONVERGED. AUNT TILDY WAS A LACE FORTRESS, ARMS CROSSED IN DEFIANCE...

I WON'T BUDGE...



SHE REPEATED THIS AS SHE WAS EVICTED IN CONSECUTIVE MOVES, LIKE A PAWN ON A CHESSBOARD, FROM THE LABORATORY. FINALLY, SHE SAT DOWN ON A CHAIR IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE FUNERAL PARLOR, THERE WERE PEWS GOING BACK INTO GREY SILENCE, AND A FLOWER SMELL...

YOU CAN'T SIT THERE, MA'AM! THAT'S WHERE THE BODY RESTS FOR THE SERVICES T'MORROW!

I'M SITTING HERE TILL I GET WHAT I WANT!

MR. CARRINGTON, MORTUARY PRESIDENT, HEARD THE DISTURBANCE AND CAME TODDLING DOWN THE AISLE TO INVESTIGATE...

HERE, HERE! MORE RESPECT! OH, MADAME. MAY I HELP YOU?

GO IN THAT BACK ROOM THERE AND TELL THAT EAGER INVESTIGATOR TO QUIT FOOLIN WITH MY BODY!



MR. CARRINGTON HURRIED OFF. AFTER FIFTEEN MINUTES OF COMPARING NOTES WITH THE MORTICIAN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, HE RETURNED, THREE SHADES WHITER...

UH... THAT IS...
MOST IRREGULAR!
MOST IRREGULAR!

LOOK HERE,
MISTER BLOOD
AND BONES!
YOU TELL
THAT...

BUT HE'S *ALREADY*
PUMPING THE *BLOOD*
FROM THE *BODY*!

WHAT?

YES. YES. SO, YOU JUST GO AWAY,
NOW, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE
DONE. THE *BLOOD'S* RUNNING
AND SOON THE BODY'LL BE
ALL FILLED WITH NICE FRESH
FORMALDEHYDE. AND
BESIDES... HE'S *ALSO* PER-
FORMING A BRIEF *AUTOPSY*!

CUT-
TIN'
ME,
IS
HE?

Y-YES. TO DETERMINE
CAUSE OF DEATH,
Y'KNOW. HE...

MARCH STRAIGHT IN AND
TELL THAT CUT-EM-UP TO
PUMP ALL THAT FINE NEW
ENGLAND BLOOD *RIGHT*
BACK INTO THAT FINE-
SKINNED BODY! AND IF
HE'S TAKEN ANYTHING *OUT*, FOR
HIM TO ATTACH IT *BACK IN* SO
IT'LL FUNCTION PROPER!
YOU HEAR?

THERE'S NOTHING I
CAN DO. *NOTHING*!

ALL RIGHT! I'M *SETTIN'* HERE...
THE NEXT *TWO HUNDRED*
YEARS! YOU *HEAR*? AND ANY-
TIME ANYONE COMES *NEAR*
ME, I'LL SPIT *ECTOPLASM*
RIGHT SQUIRT UP THEIR *LEFT*
NOSTRIL...

YOU... YOU *WOULDN'T* DO
THAT! YOU... YOU'LL
DISLOCATE OUR *BUSINESS*!
YOU *WOULDN'T*...

OH, *WOULDN'T* I?

ALL RIGHT! *ALL*
RIGHT! YOU CAN
HAVE YOUR BODY
BACK!

HA!

AUNT TILDY SHOUTED IN TRIUMPH.
THEN...WITH CAUTION...

INTACT? NO
FORMALDEHYDE?

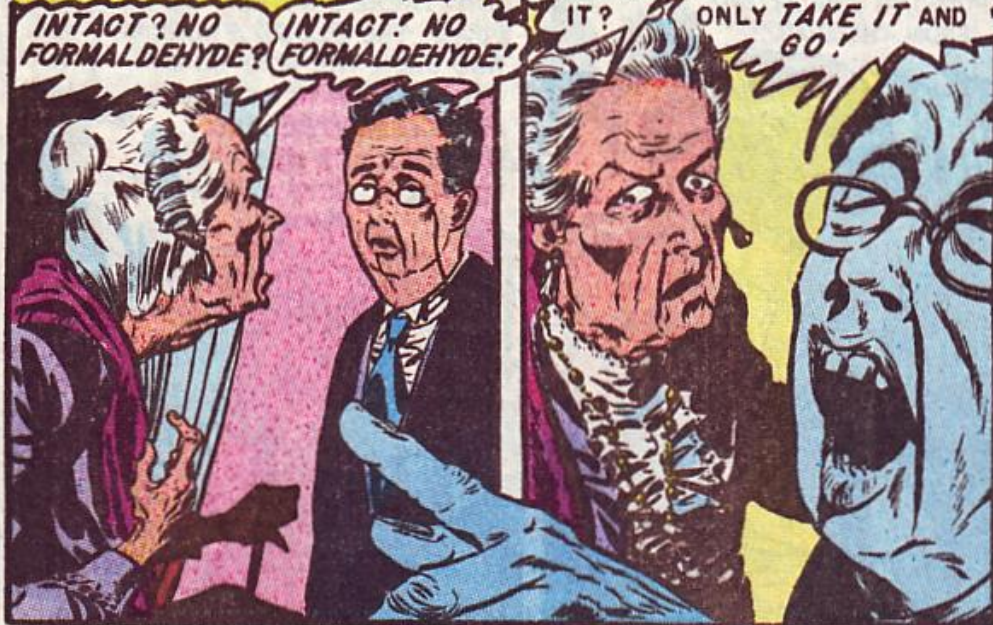
INTACT? NO
FORMALDEHYDE?

BLOOD
BACK IN
IT?

BLOOD, MY GOD, YES,
BLOOD! IF YOU'LL
ONLY TAKE IT AND
GO!

FAIR ENOUGH.
FIX 'ER UP.
IT'S A DEAL.

I'LL... TELL THE
MORTICIAN.



AUNTIE TILDY DIDN'T LOOK AT THE BODY MUCH. HER
ONLY COMMENT WAS...

NATURAL LOOKIN'. EASY! EASY! PUT THE WICKER
BASKET DOWN T'THE FLOOR WHERE I CAN STEP
IN IT.



THEN SHE LET HERSELF FALL BACK INTO THE
WICKER. A BITING SENSATION OF ARTIC COLDNESS,
A GREAT UNLIKELY NAUSEA, AND A GIDDY WHORLING,
LIKE TWO DROPS OF MATTER FUSING TOGETHER.
WATER TRYING TO SEEP INTO CONCRETE...

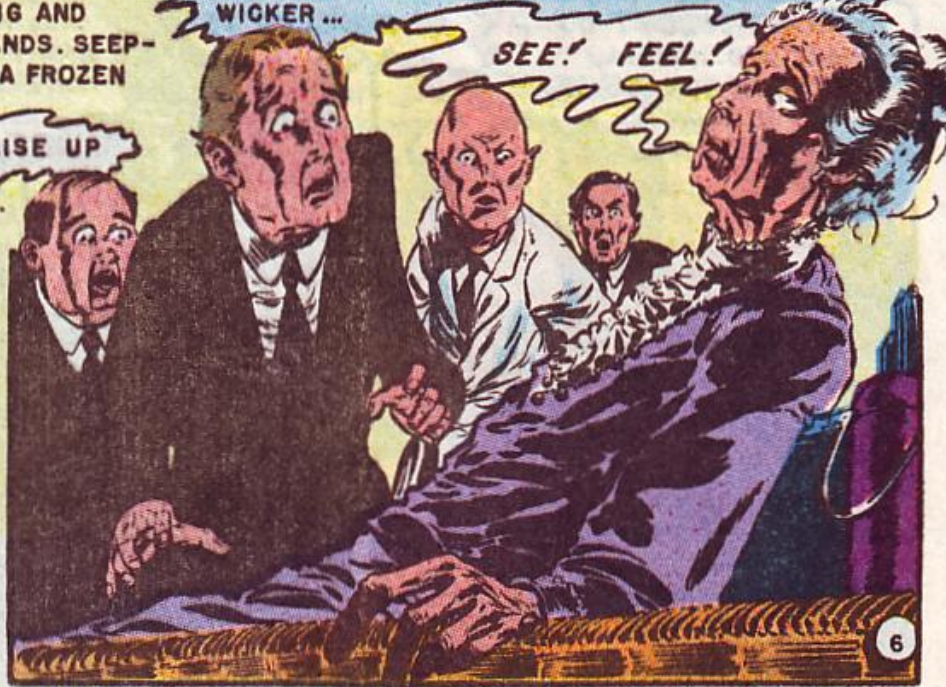


THE MORTUARY PEOPLE WATCHED AUNT TILDY'S WRIG-
GLES... TRYING TO ASSIST WITH BOOSTING AND
GRUNTING MOVES OF THEIR ARMS AND HANDS. SEEP-
ING INTO GOLD GRANITE. SEEPING INTO A FROZEN
STATUE... SQUEEZING ALL THE WAY...

THE BODY HALF ROSE, RUSTLING IN THE DRY
WICKER...

SEE! FEEL!

COME ALIVE, DERN YE! RAISE UP
A BIT...



LIGHT ENTERED THE WEBBED BLIND EYES. THE BODY FELT THE ROOM WARMTH...



MOVE...WALK...

THE BODY TOOK A CREAKINGLY UNSTEADY STEP. THE BODY WALKED...



NOW... SPEAK! MUCH OBLIGED. THANK YOU. NOW...CRY!

...AND AUNT TILDY BEGAN TO CRY TEARS OF UTTER HAPPINESS.

AND NOW, ANY AFTERNOON ABOUT FOUR, IF YOU WANT TO VISIT AUNT TILDY, YOU JUST WALK AROUND AND KNOCK ON HER DOOR. THERE'S A BIG BLACK FUNERAL WREATH ON IT... BUT DON'T MIND THAT. AUNT TILDY LEFT IT THERE. SHE HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR. JUST RAP ON THE DOOR AND SHE'LL SAY...

IS IT THE MAN IN BLACK?

NO. IT'S ONLY ME, AUNT TILDY!

SHE'LL UNLOCK THE DOUBLE-BARRED, TRIPLE-LOCKED DOOR AND SHE'LL LAUGH AND SAY...

COME IN... QUICKLY!



AND SHE'LL WHIP THE DOOR OPEN AND SLAM IT SHUT BEHIND YOU SO NO MAN-IN-BLACK CAN EVER SLIP IN WITH YOU. THEN SHE'LL ESCORT YOU IN, AND MAYBE POUR YOU SOME TEA... AND MAYBE... IF YOU'RE 'SPECIALLY GOOD, SHE'LL GIVE YOU A TREAT. SHE'LL UNFASTEN THE WHITE LACE AT HER NECK AND CHEST AND, FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, SHOW WHAT LIES BENEATH... THE LONG BLUE AUTOPSY SCAR...

NOT BAD SEWIN'... FOR A MAN!



HEE, HEE! YEP, FIENDS. THAT'S AUNT TILDY'S STORY... THE WAY RAY BRADBURY TOLD IT T'ME.

I HOPE YOU LIKED MY LITTLE SERVING OF SHIVERS FOR THIS ISSUE OF C.K.'S MAG. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT-KEEPER'S... THE VAULT OF HORROR. 'BYE, NOW!



THE END



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ILLUSTRATED
SUSPENSTORIES
WE DARE YOU TO READ!

I'VE SEEN PLENTY
OF *STIFFS* IN MY YEARS
AROUND THIS PLACE...BUT THIS
IS THE FIRST ONE THAT HAS EVER
REALLY AFFECTED ME! THERE'S
SOMETHING *WEIRD* AND
FRIGHTENING ABOUT
IT!

CITY
MORGUE

JOHNNY
CRAIG

IN THIS ISSUE:

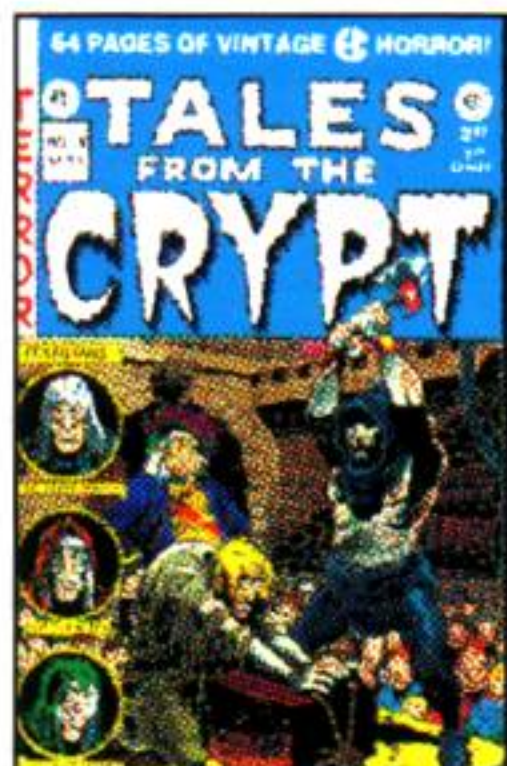
THEY FOUND HIM IN A BACK
ALLEY AND BROUGHT HIM TO
THE CITY MORGUE ...AN UN-
IDENTIFIED CADAVER! BUT
THEY DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS A...

LIVING CORPSE!

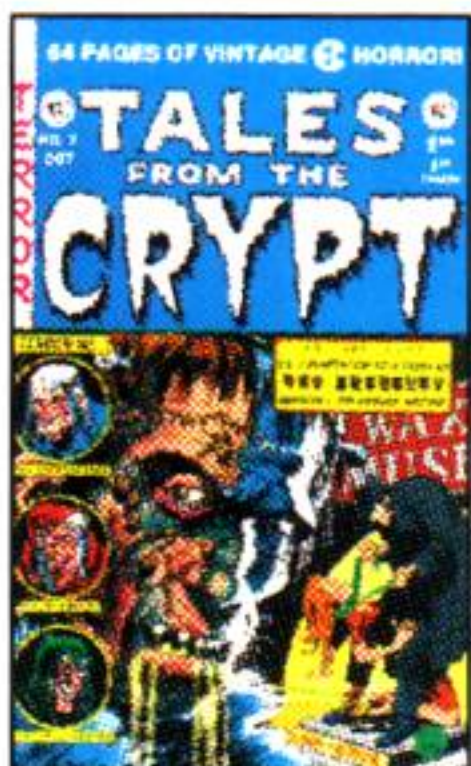
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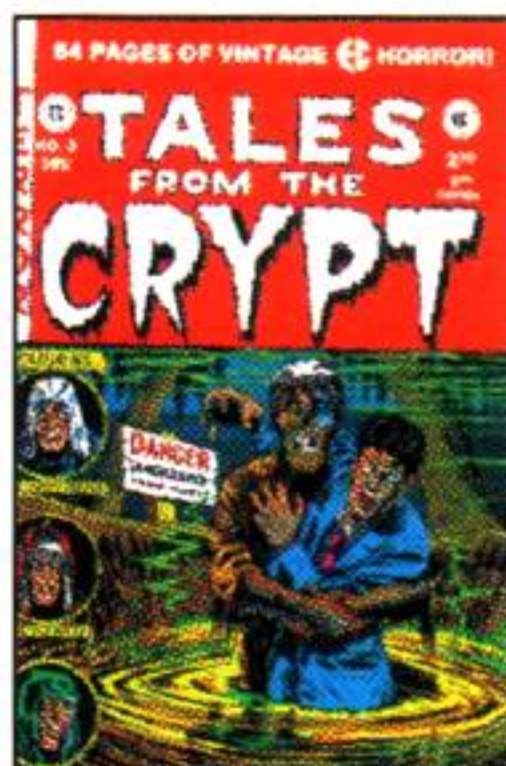
AND, WE ARE PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO OFFER TWO ISSUES FROM **EAST COAST'S** E.C. CLASSIC REPRINT LINE OF THE MID-70s. QUANTITY IS **VERY LIMITED** ON THESE, **FIRST COME-FIRST SERVED** ON THESE 32 PAGE COMICS.



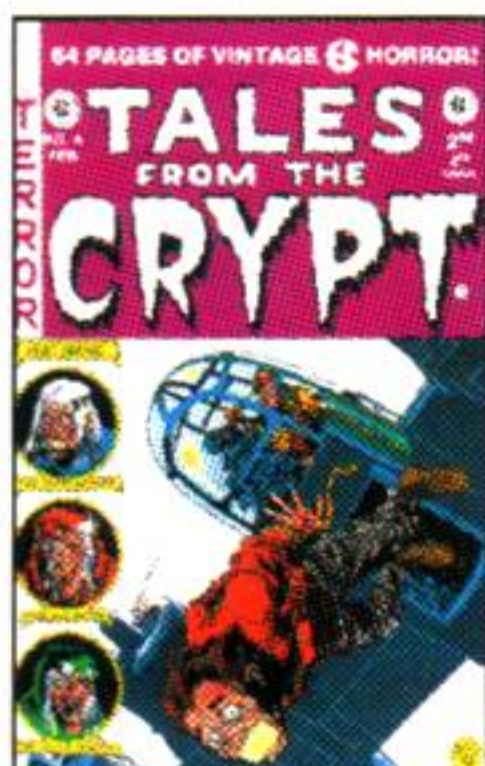
RCP CRYPT #1



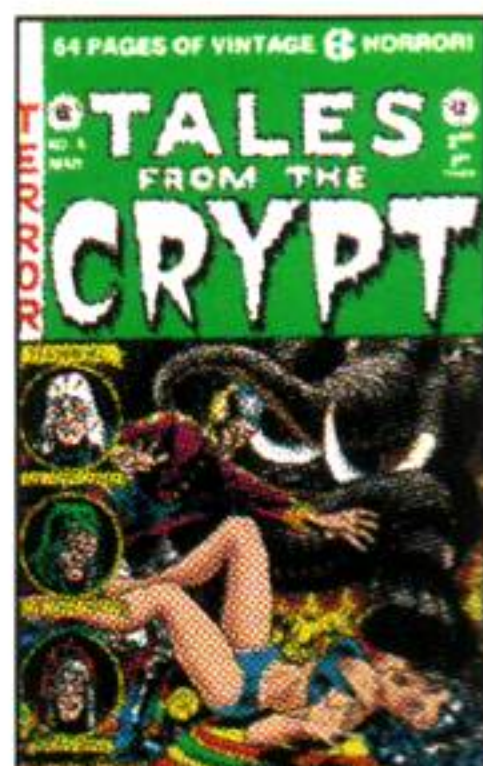
RCP CRYPT #2



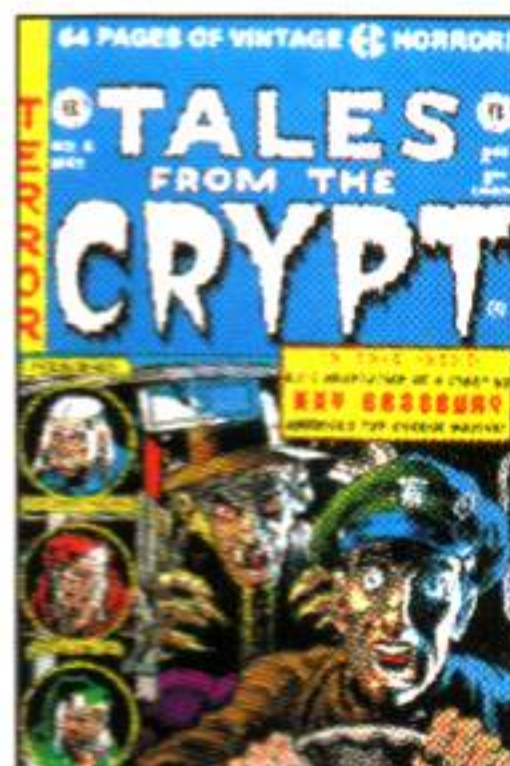
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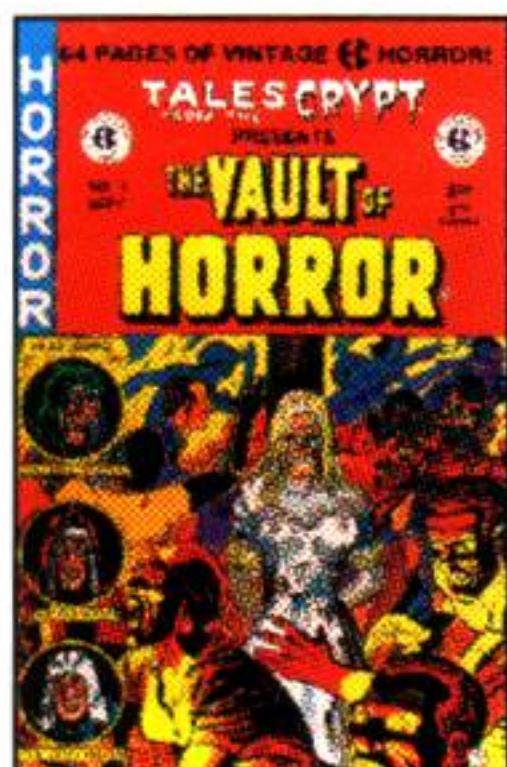
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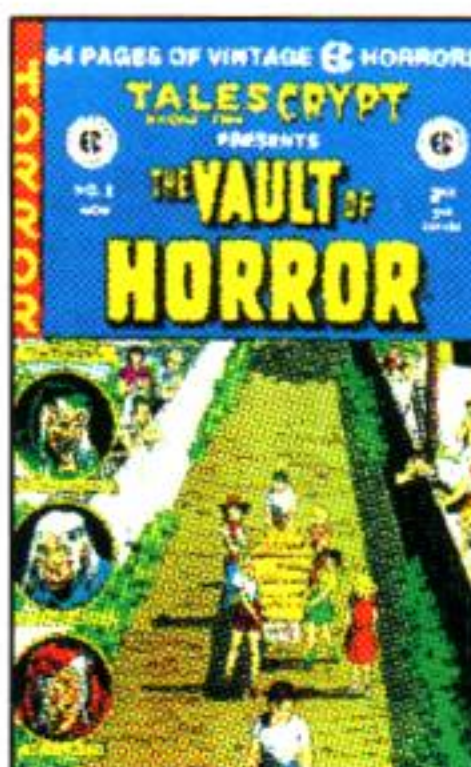
RCP CRYPT #5



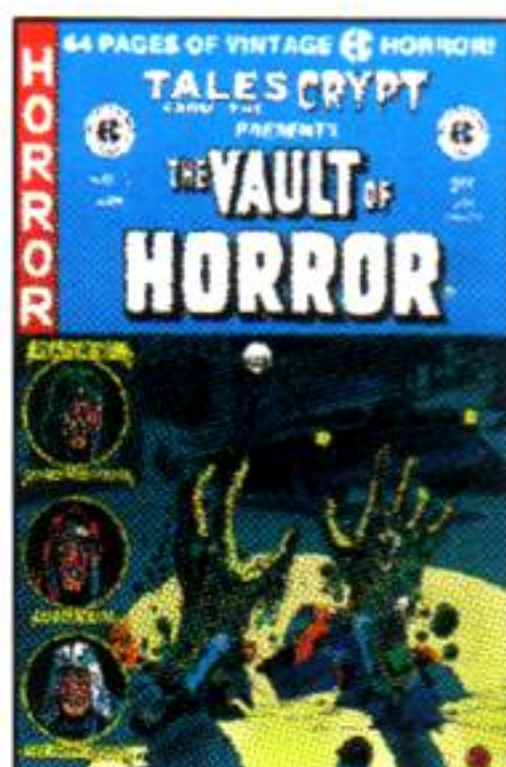
RCP CRYPT #6



RCP VAULT #1



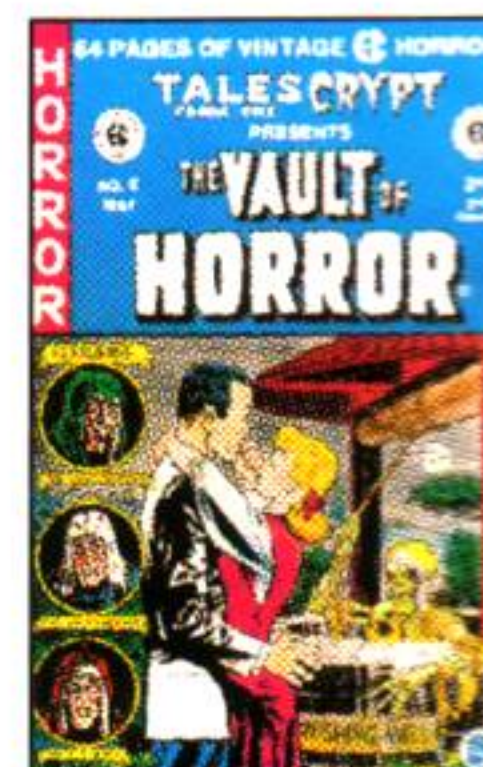
RCP VAULT #2



RCP VAULT #3



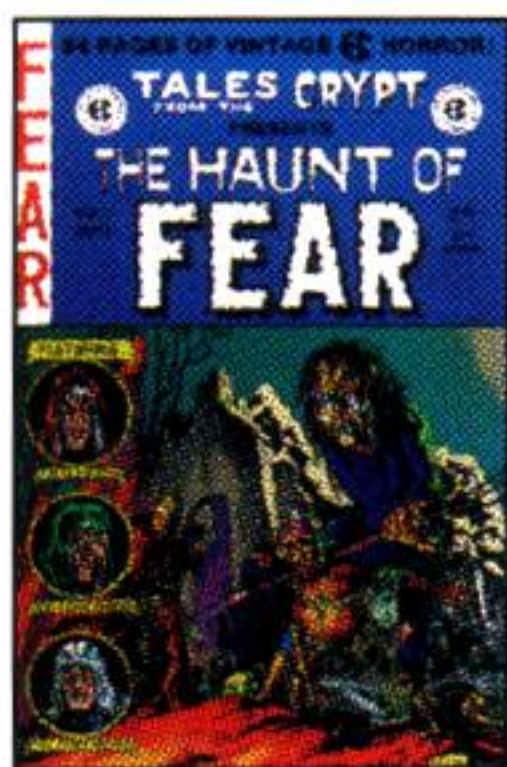
RCP VAULT #4



RCP VAULT #5



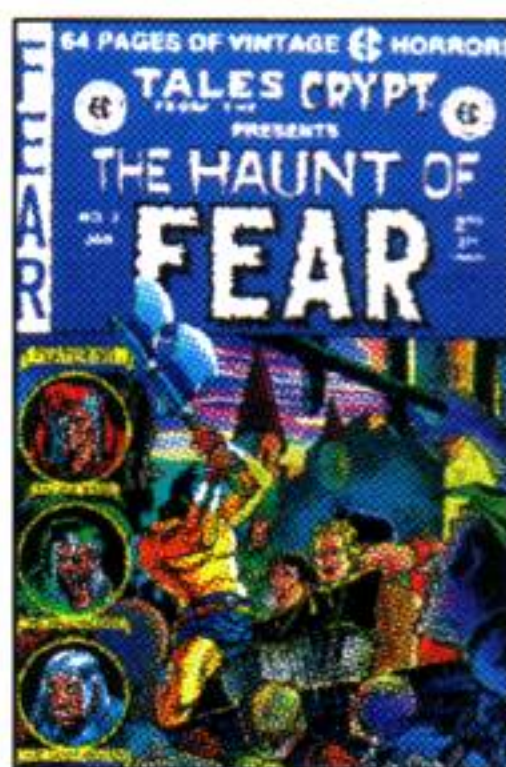
EAST COAST #11



RCP HAUNT #1



RCP HAUNT #2



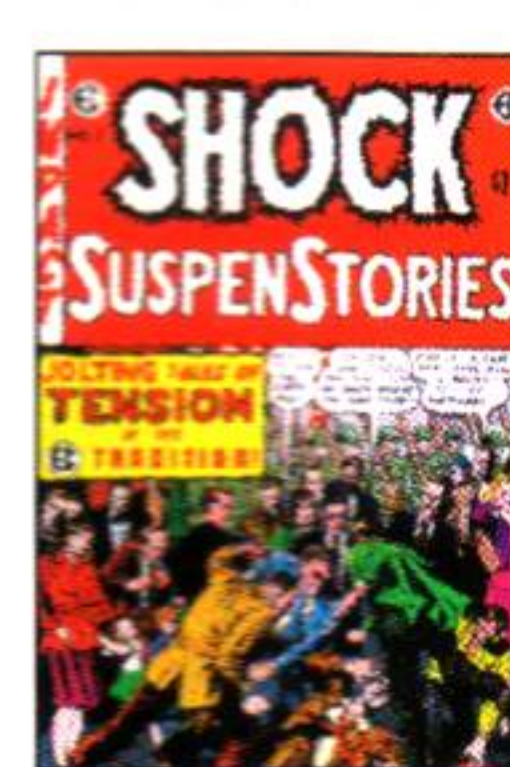
RCP HAUNT #3



RCP HAUNT #4



RCP HAUNT #5



EAST COAST #12

RCP CRYPT

#1: CRYPT 31 (1952)
CRIME 12 (1952)

#2: CRYPT 34 (1952)
CRIME 15 (1952)

#3: CRYPT 24 (1951)
CRIME 21 (1954)

#4: CRYPT 43 (1954)
CRIME 18 (1953)

#5: CRYPT 32 (1952)
CRIME 23 (1954)

#6: CRYPT 36 (1953)
CRIME 6 (1951)

RCP VAULT

#1: VAULT 28 (1952)
W SCI 18 (1952)

#2: VAULT 33 (1953)
W SCI 20 (1953)

#3: VAULT 26 (1952)
W SCI 7 (1951)

#4: VAULT 35 (1954)
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#5: VAULT 18 (1951)
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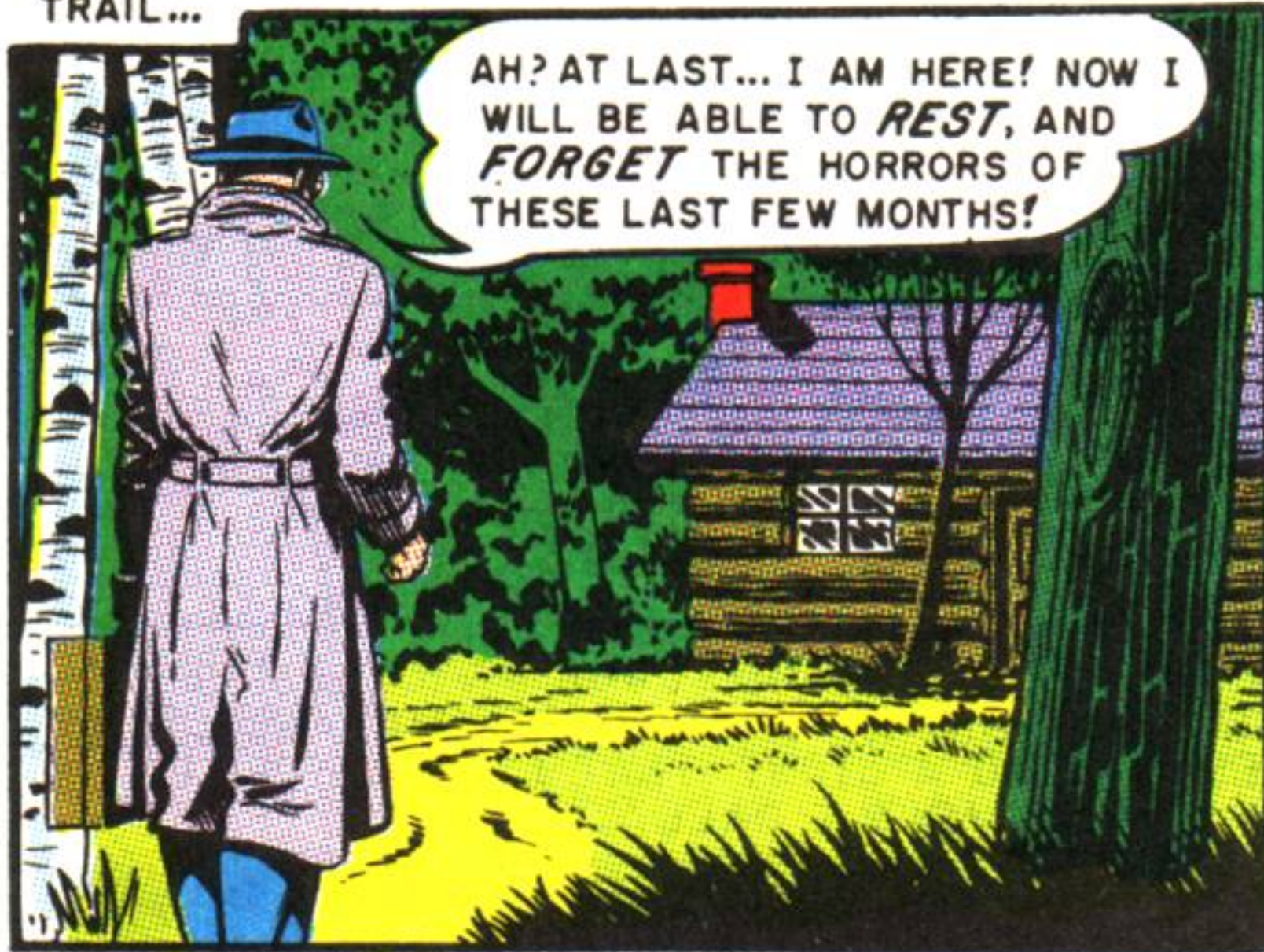
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

SO, WE MEET AGAIN, DEAR READER! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE
CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS TIME, I HAVE DUG *DEEP* INTO MY COLLECTION
OF BLOOD-CURDLING TALES TO FIND A STORY THAT I'M *SURE* WILL
TERRIFY YOU! THIS *HAIR-RAISER* I CALL...

THE MAESTRO'S HAND!



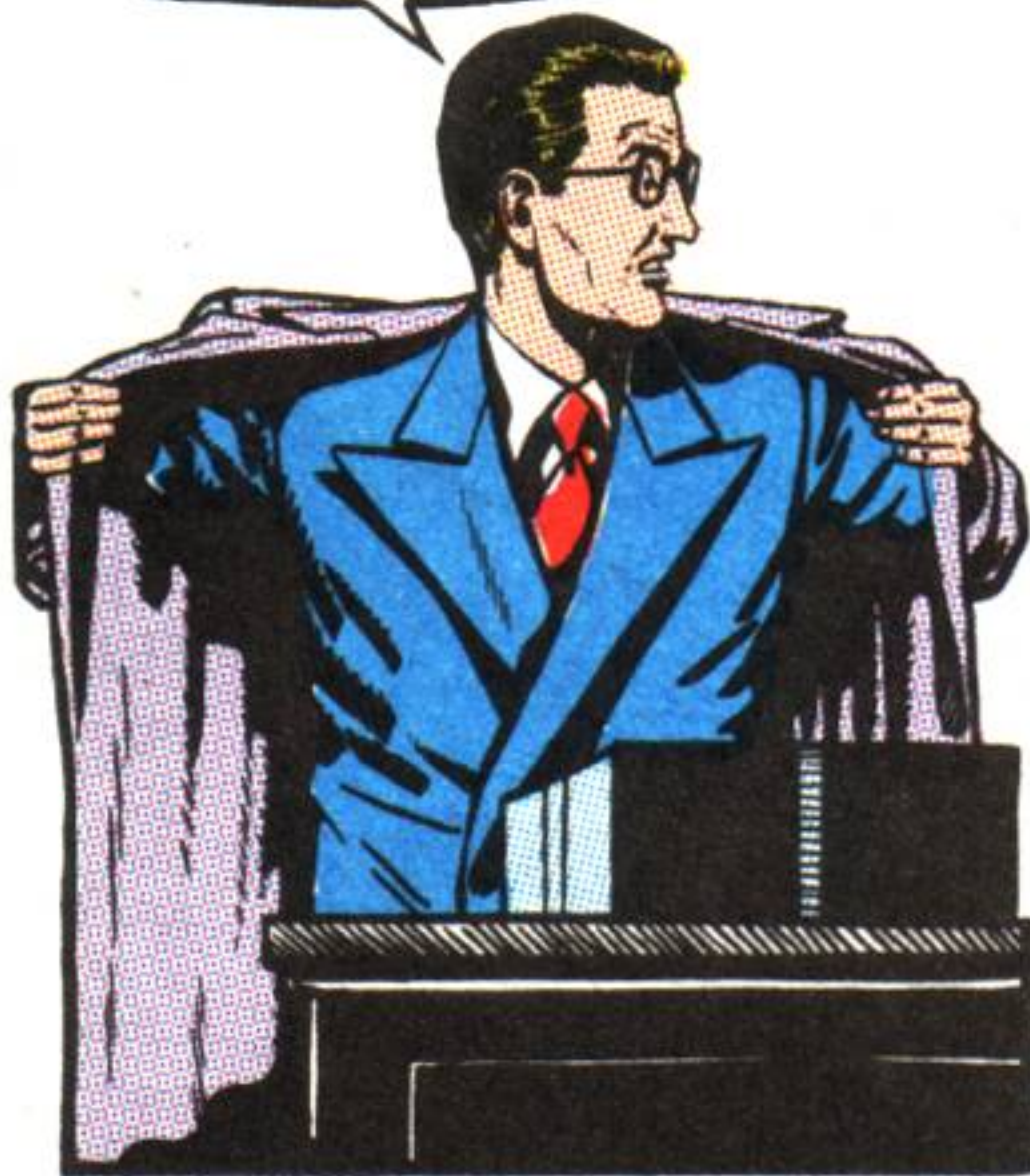
MY STORY BEGINS JUST OUTSIDE OF A DESERTED LOG CABIN IN A LONELY STRETCH OF WOODS! DOCTOR EMANUEL HELLMAN APPROACHES OVER AN OVERGROWN TRAIL...



AS THE DOCTOR UNLOCKS THE LONG-SEALED DOOR, HIS EYES FALL UPON...



I WONDER WHAT IT CAN BE? BR-R-R-R! IT'S COLD! I'LL START A FIRE, FIRST!



AS THE GLOW OF THE FIRE PIERCES THE DIM INTERIOR OF THE CABIN, DR. HELLMAN SINKS WEARILY INTO A CHAIR...



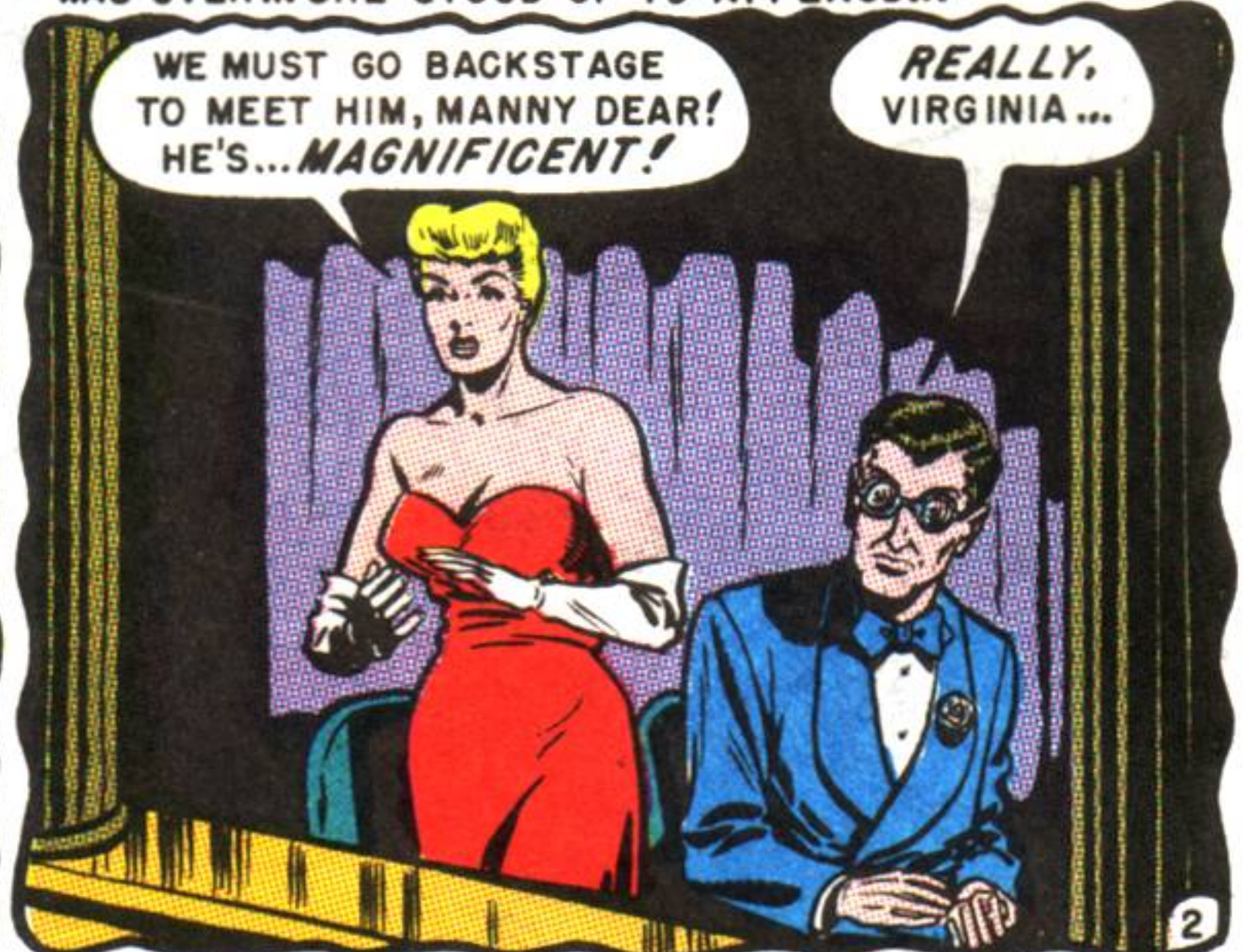
AS THE FLAMES OF THE FIRE LEAP HIGHER...AND ITS WARMTH SPREADS THROUGH THE CABIN...DR. EMANUEL HELLMAN SITS STARING INTO ITS DANCING LIGHT...



YES, DOCTOR HELLMAN! YOU REMEMBER IT *WELL*! YOU HAD TAKEN YOUR FIANCEE, VIRGINIA CADDY, TO HEAR THE GREAT VLADIMIR BORRSTEIN PLAY...AND AS THE PIANO MUSIC GREW AND SWELLED TO ITS STIR-RING CRESCENDO...



YOU SAT THERE AND WATCHED VIRGINIA, AS THE CONCERT WENT ON! SHE LISTENED, ENTHRALLED... AND WHEN IT WAS OVER... SHE STOOD UP TO APPLAUD...



YOU OBJECTED, DR. HELLMAN... BUT IN THE END, YOU JOINED THE GROUP OF ADMIRERS CROWDED AROUND MAESTRO BORRSTEIN! VIRGINIA WORKED HER WAY FORWARD... AND THEN... THEIR EYES MET...



BRAVO, MR. BORRSTEIN! YOU PLAYED... **SUPERBLY!**

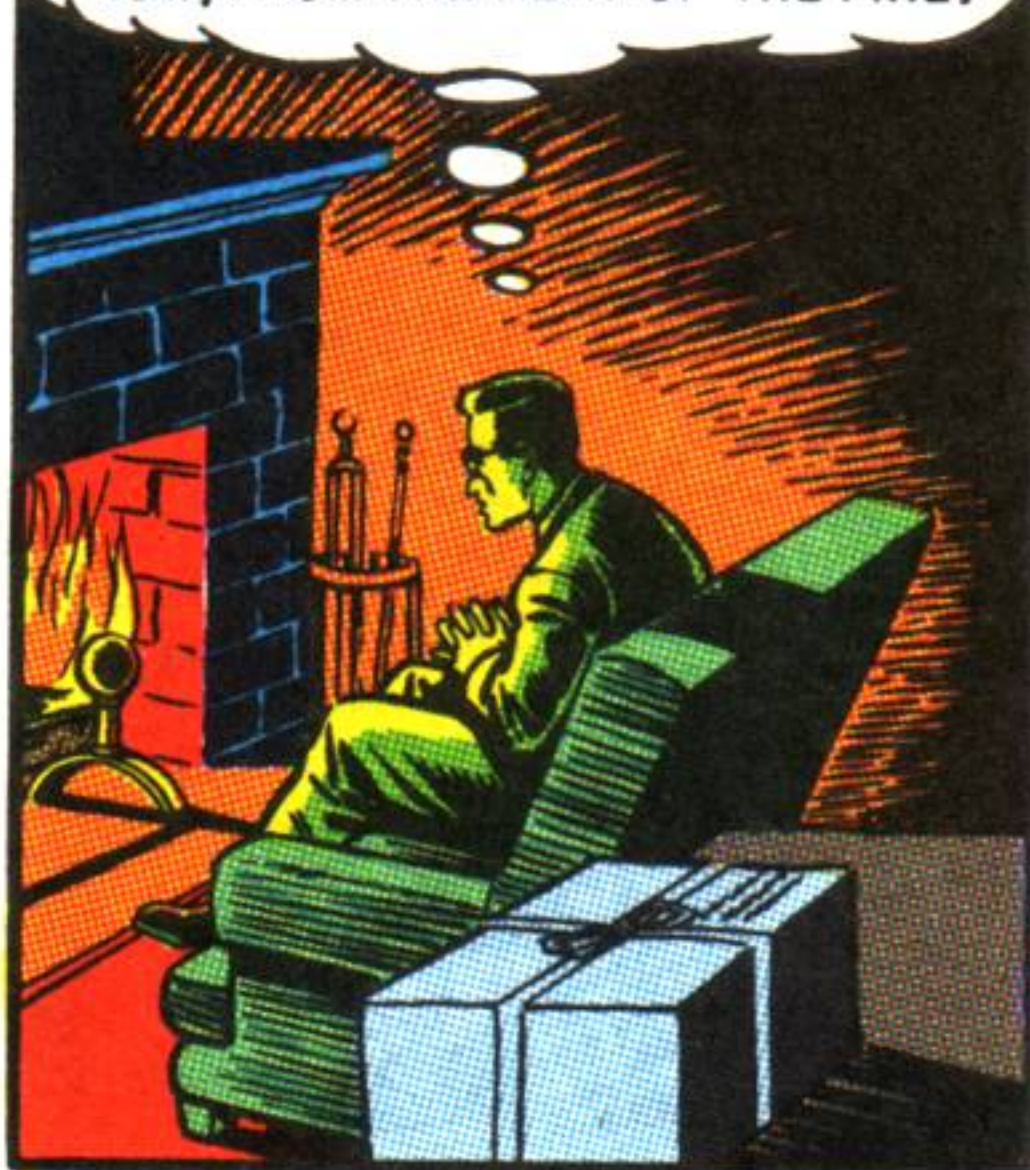
WHY, THANK YOU SO MUCH, MISS... MISS...

CADDY! VIRGINIA CADDY! I WANT SO MUCH TO TALK TO YOU **AGAIN**... ABOUT YOUR MUSIC! WILL YOU CALL ME? I'M IN THE BOOK!

DELIGHTED... MISS CADDY! **DELIGHTED!**



...THAT'S HOW IT BEGAN! WHEN I SAW HER SMILE AT HIM LIKE THAT, I FELT MY FACE GROW HOT... AS NOW, FROM THE HEAT OF THE FIRE!



YES, DR. HELLMAN! THAT WAS THE BEGINNING... THE BEGINNING OF THE END! THEY SAW EACH OTHER MUCH AFTER THAT NIGHT. . .



WHY, VLADIMIR! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU **PAINTED!**

A LITTLE! DO YOU LIKE IT?

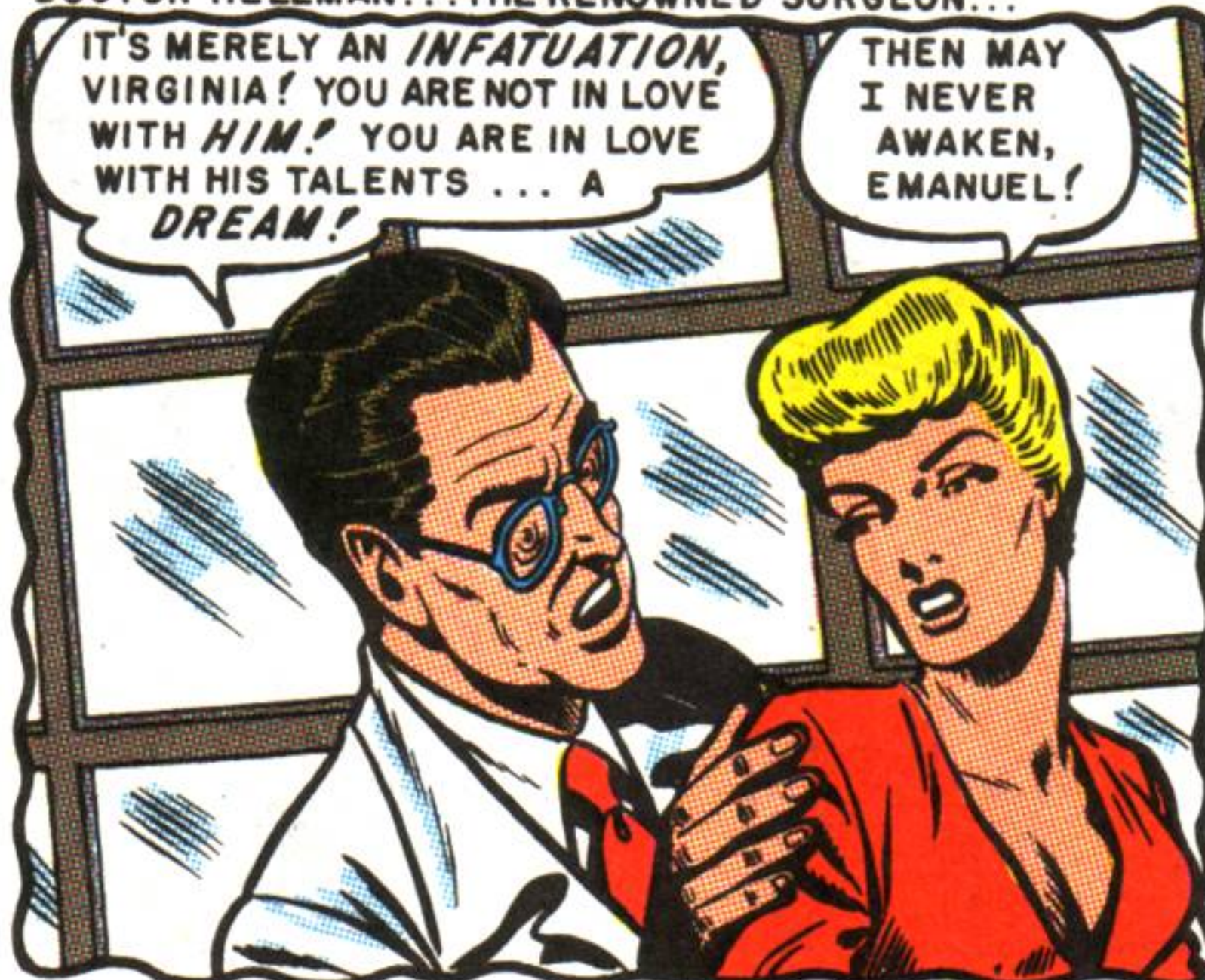
LIKED IT? SHE **LOVED** IT! SHE WAS MAD ABOUT **ANYTHING** HE DID! SHE HAD ALWAYS ADMIRED GENIUS... CREATIVE ABILITY! BORRSTEIN WAS THE ANSWER... THE TYPE OF MAN VIRGINIA COULD...



YES, EMANUEL! I **LOVE** HIM! WE ARE GOING TO BE MARRIED!

BUT... VIRGINIA!

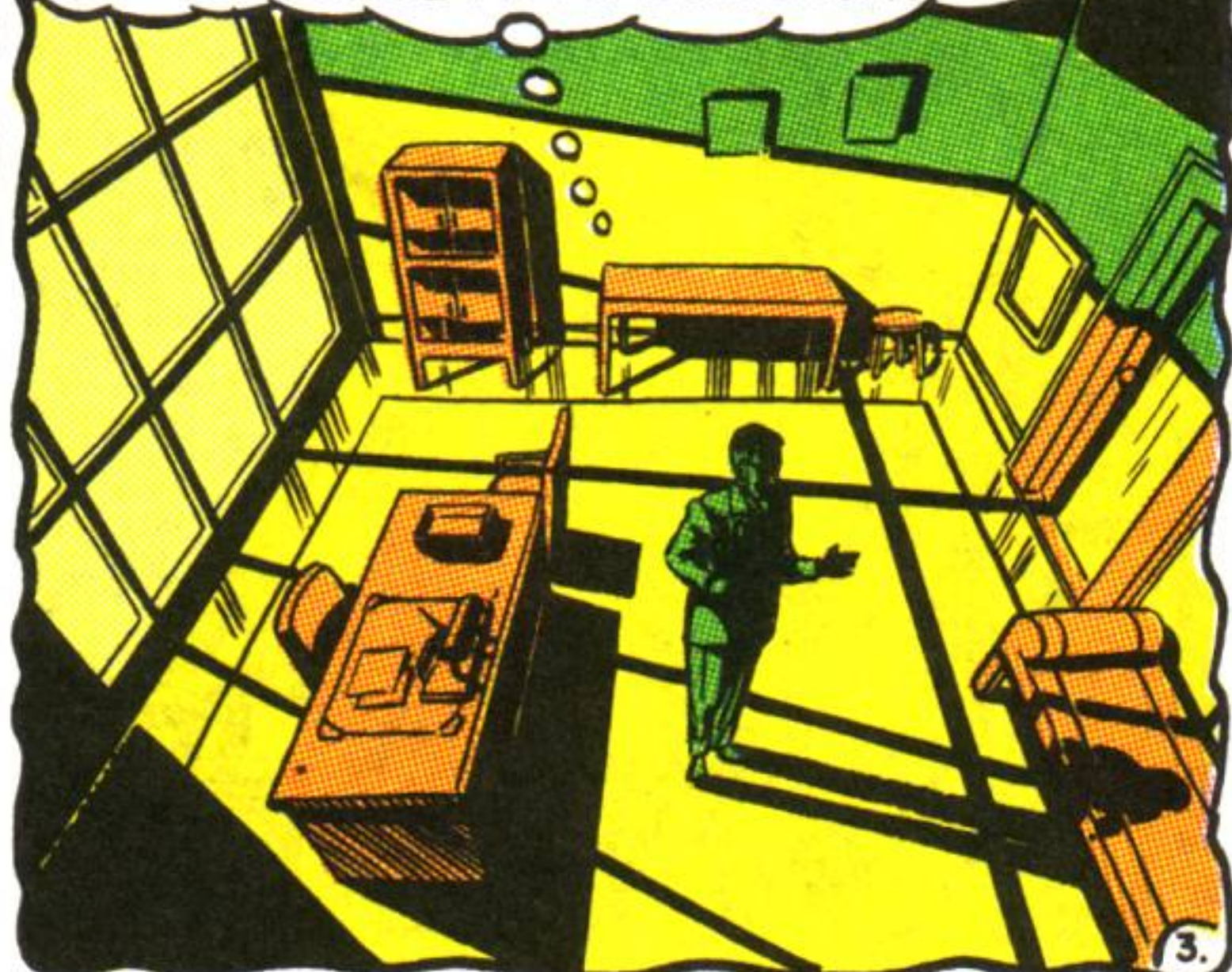
SHE GAVE YOU BACK HER RING! YOU... THE **GREAT** DOCTOR HELLMAN... THE RENOWNED SURGEON...



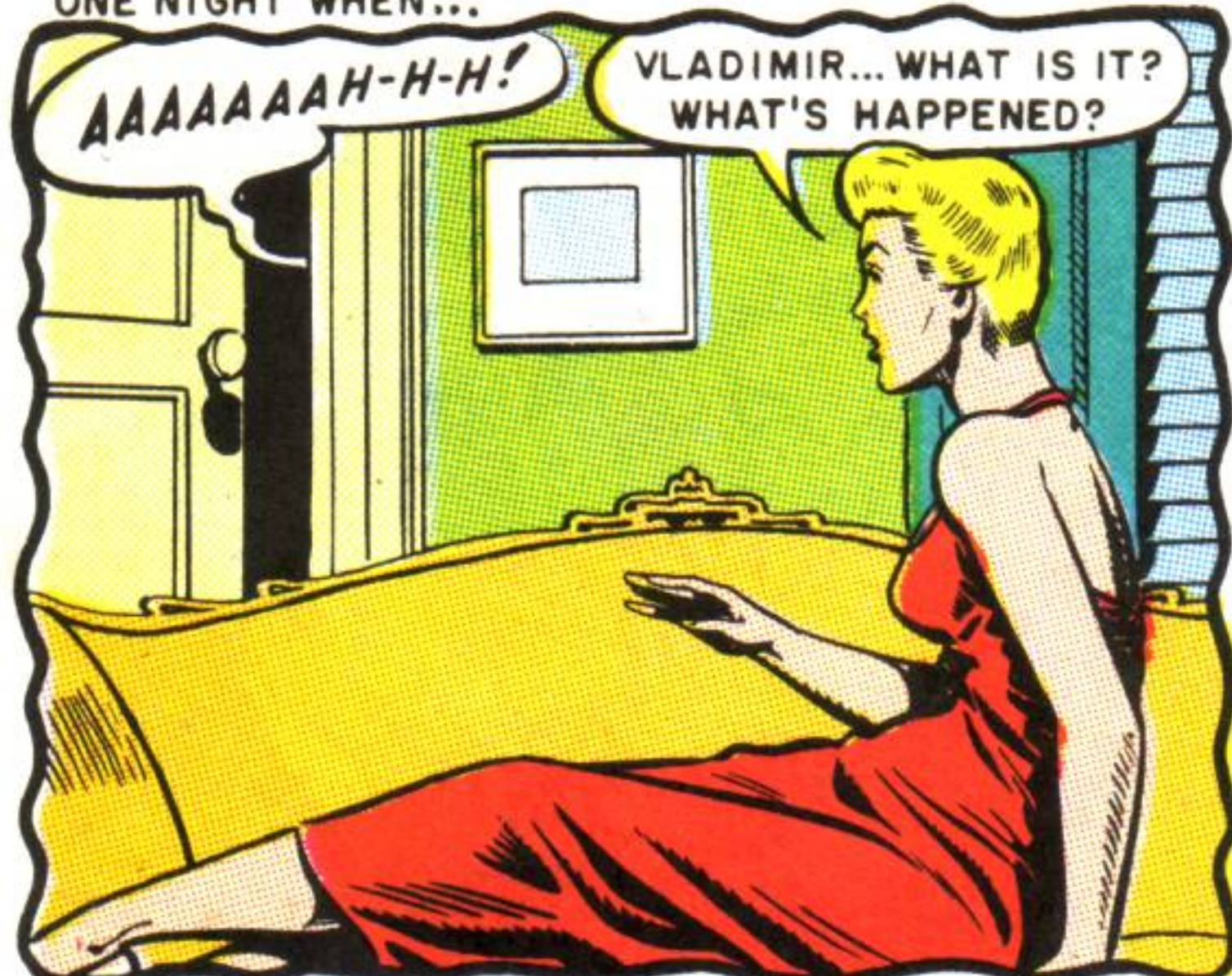
IT'S MERELY AN **INFATUATION**, VIRGINIA! YOU ARE NOT IN LOVE WITH **HIM**! YOU ARE IN LOVE WITH HIS TALENTS... A **DREAM!**

THEN MAY I NEVER AWAKEN, EMANUEL!

SHE WILL COME BACK TO ME! SHE **WILL** COME BACK TO ME... SHE **WILL**... SHE **MUST!** I'LL MAKE HER **FORGET** HIM IF I HAVE TO...



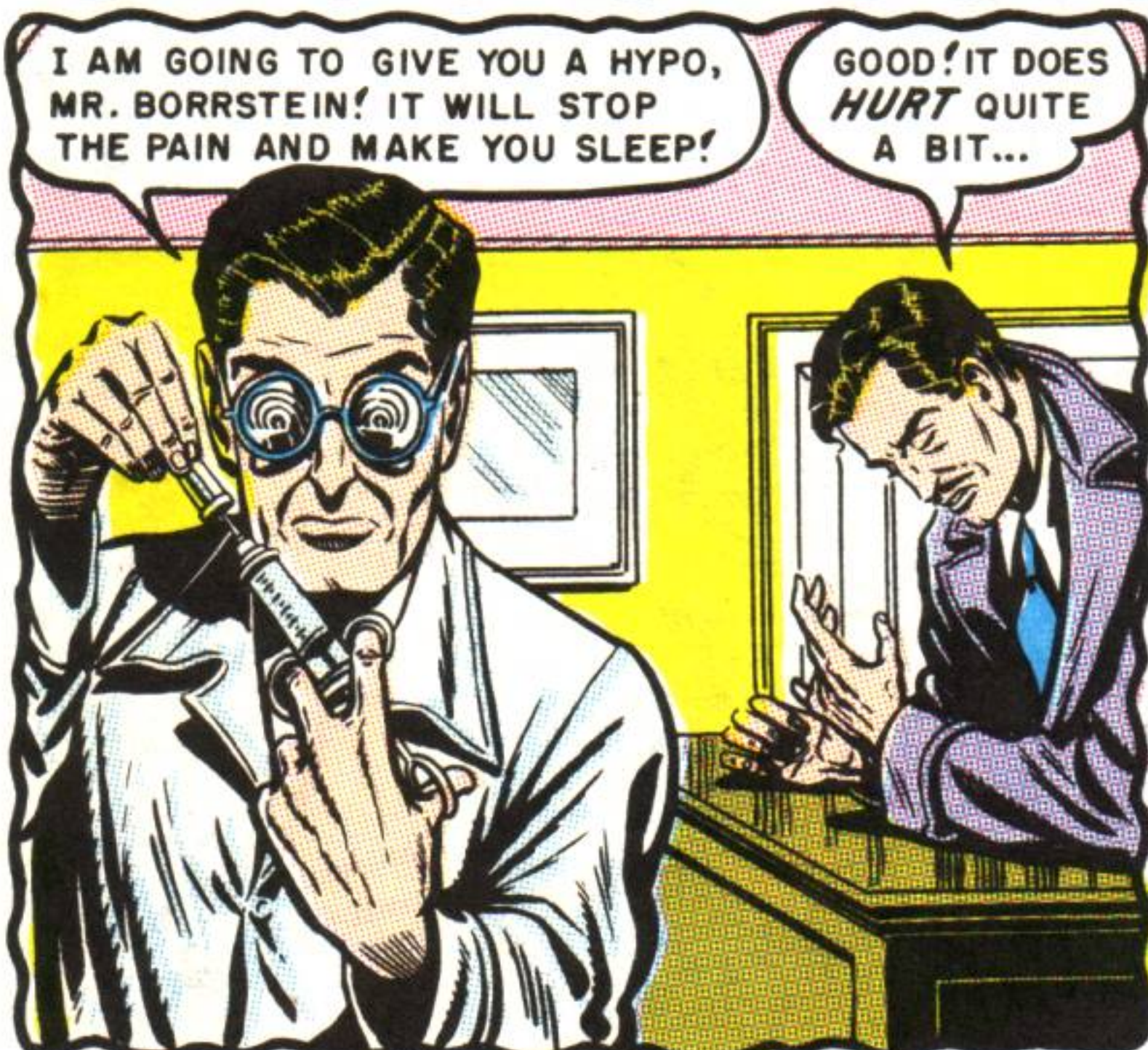
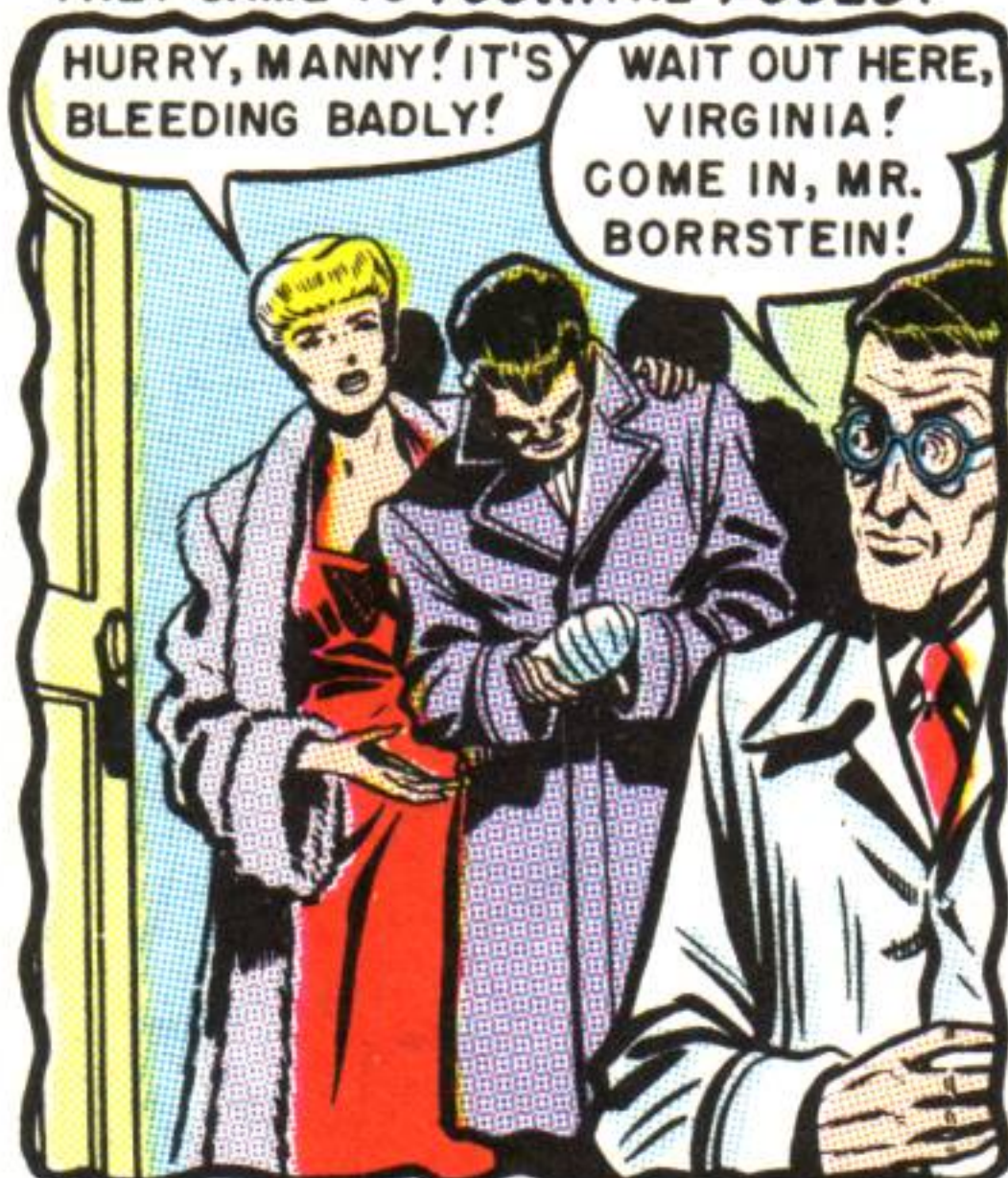
AH, DEAR READER! WHAT EVILS MEN WILL COMMIT FOR THE LOVE OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN! AND DR. HELLMAN WAS NO EXCEPTION! HIS CHANCE CAME ONE NIGHT WHEN...



JUST LIKE THE NURSERY RHYME ABOUT THE SPIDER AND THE FLY, EH, DOCTOR? THEY CAME TO *YOU*... THE *FOOLS*!

HIS HAND... HIS WONDERFUL HAND FROM WHICH SUCH BEAUTIFUL MUSIC FLOWED! HOW YOU HATED IT! HOW YOU *HATED* WHAT IT HAD DONE TO YOU... AND YOUR LOVE!

IT WAS A BAD SLASH! BUT... NOT NEARLY BAD ENOUGH TO WARRANT WHAT *YOU* HAD IN MIND...



SHE LEFT AND YOU WENT BACK INTO YOUR OFFICE... TO THE INSTRUMENT CABINET...

HE'LL *NEVER* PLAY AGAIN...

YES, DOCTOR HELLMAN! YOU REMEMBER IT WELL! IN FACT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET IT... EVER! THE BLOOD... THE TEARING FLESH... THE SAWING OF THE BONE... AND THEN...

IT... GASP... IS DONE!

YOU DIDN'T SLEEP WELL AFTER THAT, DID YOU, DOCTOR? BORRSTEIN, DOWNSTAIRS... UNDER THE ANESTHETIC... AND YOU IN YOUR SWEATY BED...

BORRSTEIN! HE'S AWAKE!

A-A-H-H-H!

MY HAND! *WHERE IS MY HAND?*

EASY, BORRSTEIN! EASY! IT COULDN'T BE HELPED! THE BLEEDING... IT WOULDN'T STOP... NOT EVEN A TOURNETTE... AND THE GANGRENE... I *HAD* TO DO IT... TO SAVE YOUR ARM!

I SHALL NEVER PLAY AGAIN! *NEVER! NEVER!*
SOB... SOB...

HERE, TAKE THIS, BORRSTEIN! IT WILL MAKE YOU SLEEP!

YOU DID THIS TO ME! YOU CUT MY HAND OFF ON PURPOSE! YOU HATE ME BECAUSE I TOOK VIRGINIA FROM YOU... AND NOW YOU'VE TAKEN REVENGE! I CURSE YOU... I CURSE YOU... WITH THE HAND YOU CUT FROM ME...

BORRSTEIN... *WAIT!* YOU'RE IN NO CONDITION TO *LEAVE*...

IN THE MORNING, HE WAS DEAD! YOU READ IT IN THE PAPERS! VLADIMIR BORRSTEIN HAD JUMPED IN FRONT OF A SUBWAY TRAIN... MANGLED BEYOND RECOGNITION! THEN... SHE CAME...

VIRGINIA!

HE TOLD ME WHAT YOU DID TO HIM... HE CALLED ME BEFORE HE KILLED HIMSELF! I *HATE* YOU! YOU'RE EVIL... I *HATE* YOU *HATE* YOU... *HATE* YOU!

AND THEN, *SHE KILLED HERSELF...*
AND YOU CAME HERE, DOCTOR, TO THIS
LONELY CABIN... TO FORGET!



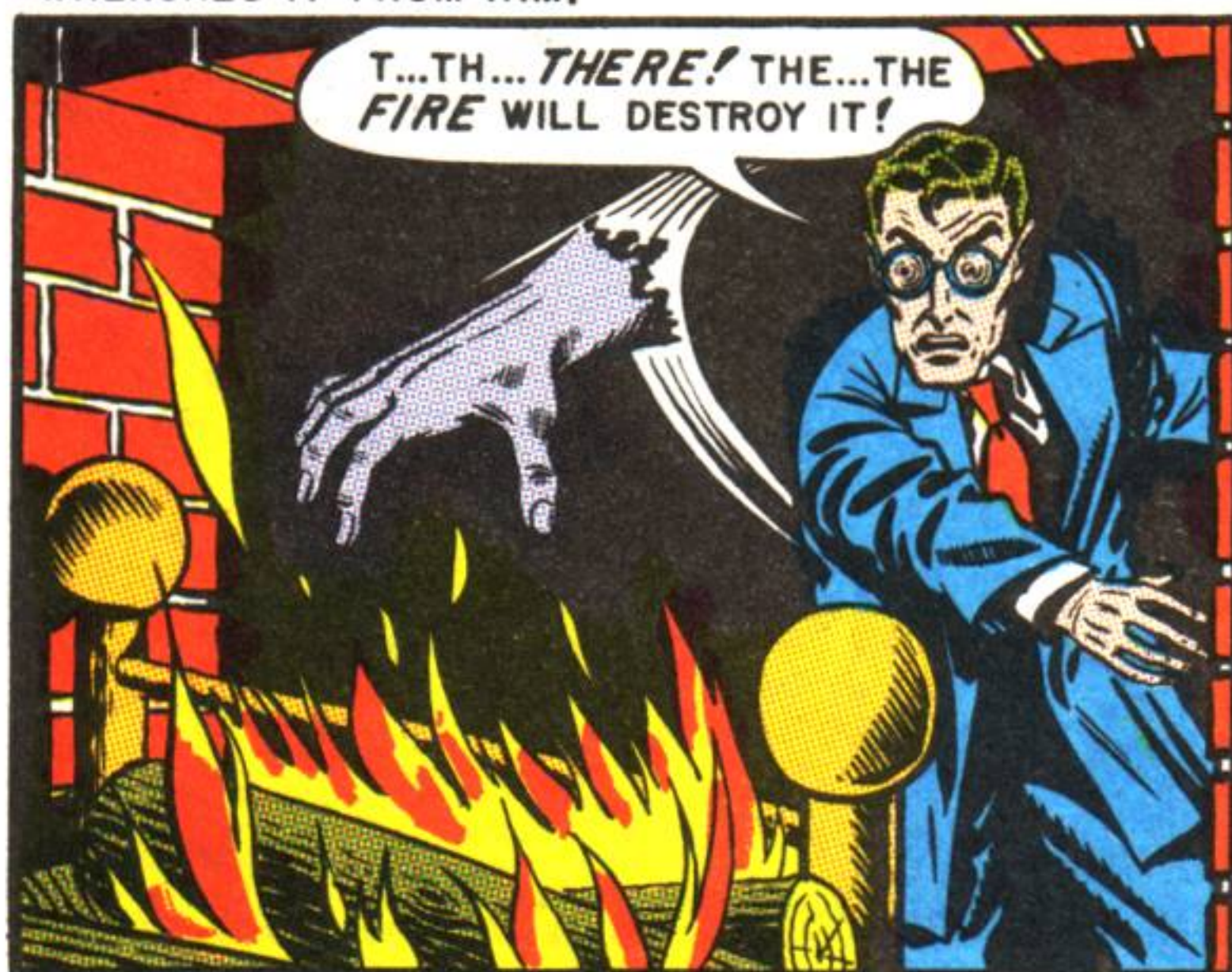
SLOWLY, DOCTOR HELLMAN UNWRAPS
THE PARCEL! INSIDE IS A SMALL
BOX... AND AS HE OPENS IT...



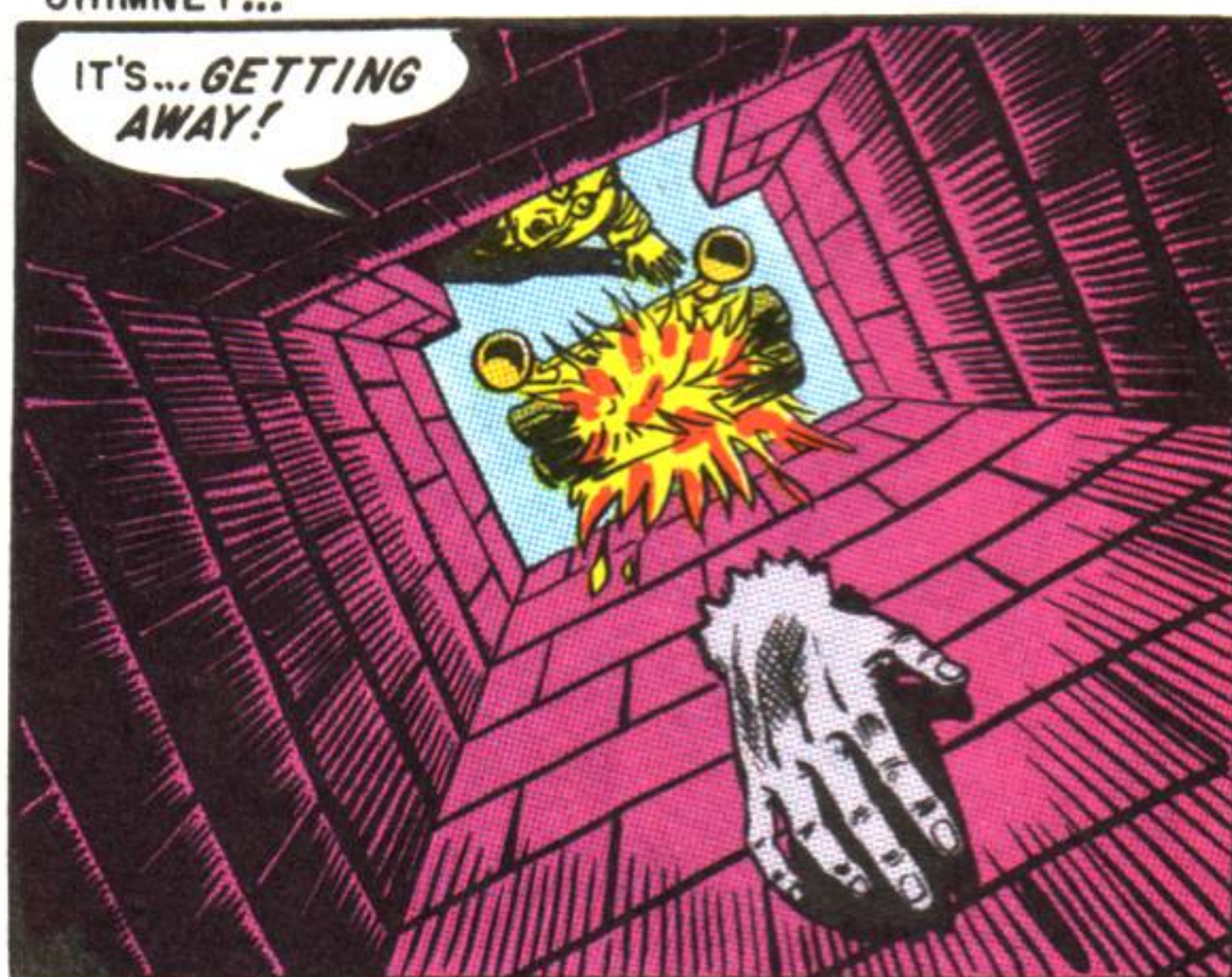
SWIFTLY, LIKE A CAT, THE HAND
SPRINGS FROM THE BOX... TO HIS
THROAT...



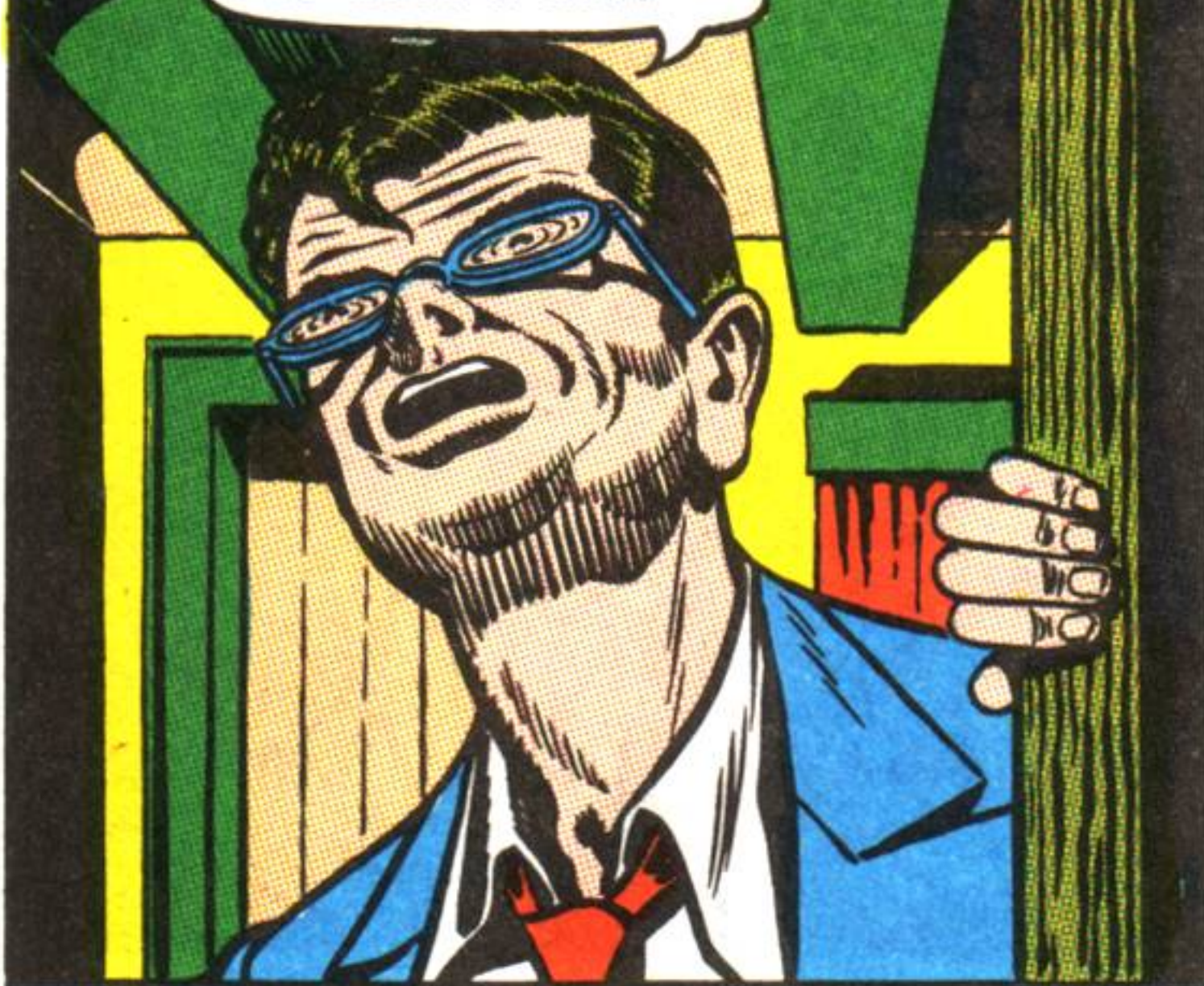
SUMMONING ALL HIS STRENGTH, DOCTOR HELLMAN
TEARS AT THE HAND CLUTCHING HIS THROAT, AND
WRENCHES IT FROM HIM!



BUT EVEN AS HE WATCHES, THE HAND, SINGED AND
BLACK, JUMPS FROM THE FIRE AND SCURRIES UP THE
CHIMNEY...



I CAN HEAR IT... CLATTERING OVER THE ROOF!
THE *DOORS!* THE *WINDOWS!* I'VE GOT
TO LOCK IT OUT!



AND EVEN AS HE WATCHES FROM THE WINDOW, DOCTOR
HELLMAN CAN SEE THE HAND MOVING ABOUT IN THE
GRASS NEAR THE HOUSE...



THE MINUTES BECOME HOURS... AND DOCTOR HELLMAN SITS, TERRIFIED, IN A CHAIR...



BUT AS THE HOURS DRAG ON... DOCTOR HELLMAN'S EYES, HEAVY WITH SLEEP... CLOSE! SUDDENLY... THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH MUSIC... **PIANO MUSIC!**



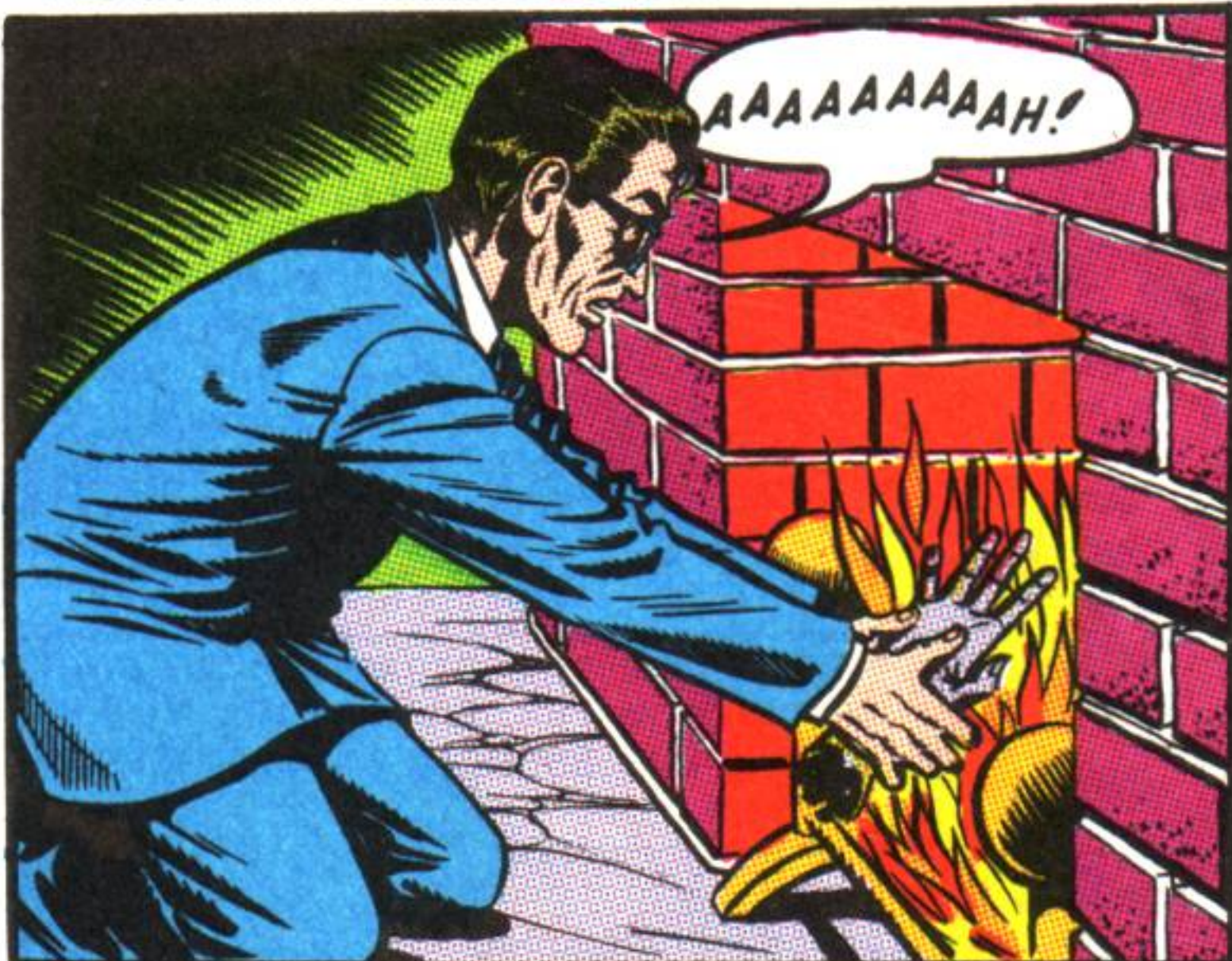
CAUTIOUSLY, DOCTOR HELLMAN SLIPS TOWARD THE PIANO... AND THEN HE SEES IT...



QUIETLY, HELLMAN MOVES CLOSER... AND CLOSER... AND THEN HE LUNGES...



QUICKLY HE STUMBLES ACROSS THE ROOM... AND FALLING ON HIS KNEES BEFORE THE FIRE, HE THRUSTS THE SQUIRMING HAND INTO IT...



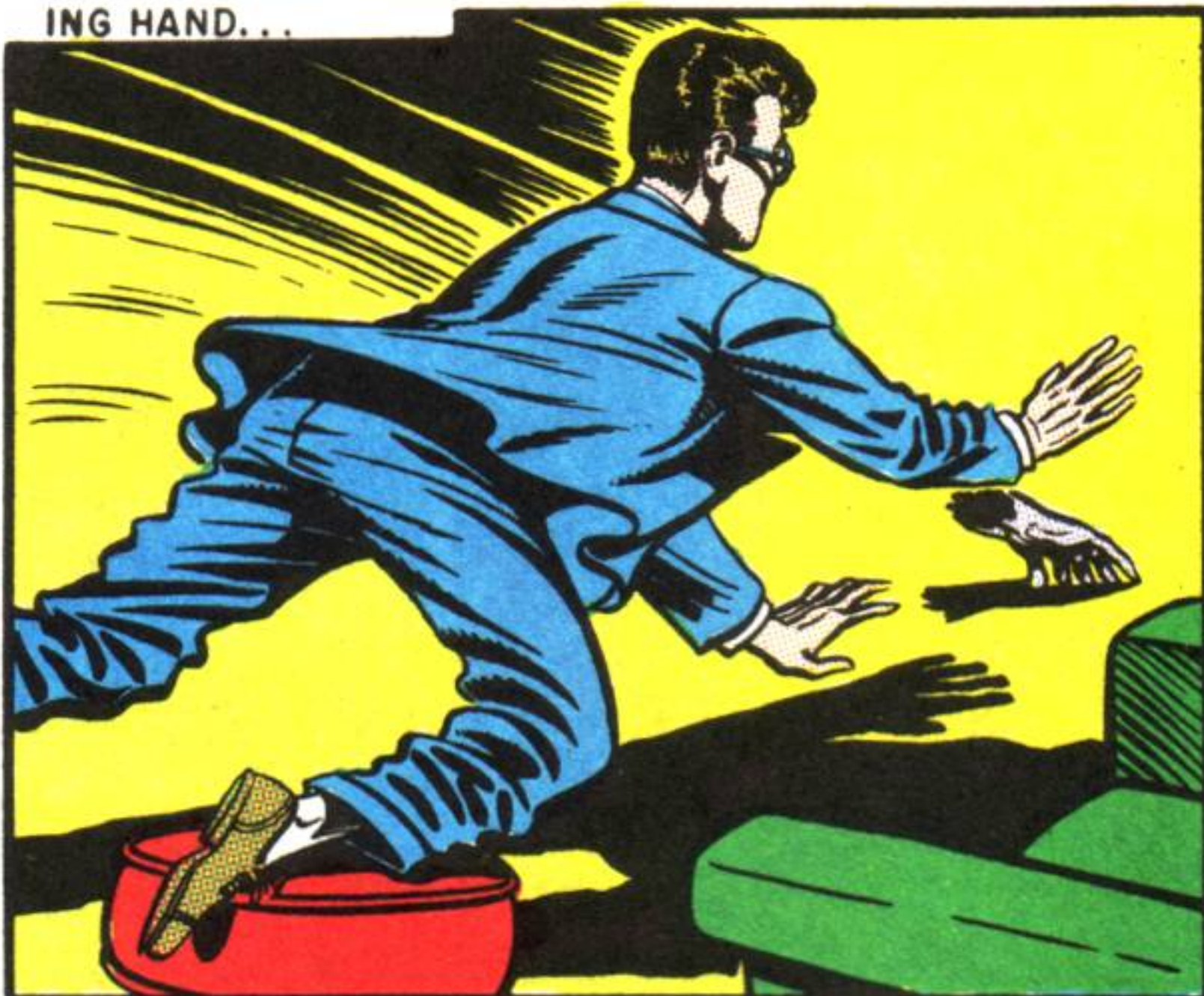
AS THE HUNGRY FLAMES LICK DOCTOR HELLMAN'S FINGERS, AND HE BECOMES CONSCIOUS OF THE PAIN... HE RELAXES HIS GRIP ON THE WRITHING HAND...



THE HAND DARTS ACROSS THE FLOOR...RUNNING ON ITS FINGERS...THE STUMP OF THE WRIST RAISED!



BUT AS DOCTOR HELLMAN STAGGERS AFTER THE SCAMPERING HAND...



SUDDENLY THE HAND TURNS AND SPRINGS AT THE DOCTOR'S THROAT...



VAINLY, DOCTOR HELLMAN STRUGGLES, TRYING TO PULL THE HAND FROM ITS STRANGLE HOLD ON HIS THROAT...



BUT, AFTER A WHILE, HIS STRENGTH EBBS...AND THE DOCTOR'S GRIP RELAXES! HE IS *DEAD* FROM STRANGULATION!



A FEW DAYS LATER, WHEN THE CARETAKER DISCOVERS HIS BODY... AND CALLS THE POLICE...



AND THAT'S THE STORY, DEAR READER! THE "HAND" WAS IN DOCTOR HELLMAN'S OWN MIND! THAT'S WHAT HE GOT FOR COMMITTING SUCH AN UNDERHANDED TRICK!



GRIPPING TALE, WASN'T IT! WELL, IF YOU CAN STAND IT, THERE ARE MORE STORIES FROM MY COLLECTION FOLLOWING THIS ONE! TAKE A GOOD HOLD OF YOURSELF...HEH-HEH...AND READ ON!

IF YOU LIKE THIS STORY AND THE OTHER STORIES IN THIS BOOK, WON'T YOU WRITE ME? ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO:

CRYPT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS, MO 65775

ON FOG-SHROUDED NIGHTS, IN THE LONELIEST OF PLACES, STRANGE HORRORS WALK--UNSEEN AND UNKNOWN TO MORTALS! BUT SOMETIMES... SOMETIMES THE BARRIER OF TERROR LIFTS SLIGHTLY AND WEIRD *THINGS* ENTER THE CITIES OF MAN! SUCH A THING WAS...

THE LIVING CORPSE



JED BRYANT'S JOB AS ATTENDANT AT THE MORGUE WAS NOT WHAT ONE WOULD CALL PLEASANT, BUT JED WAS GETTING OLD, AND THE WORK WAS EASY...



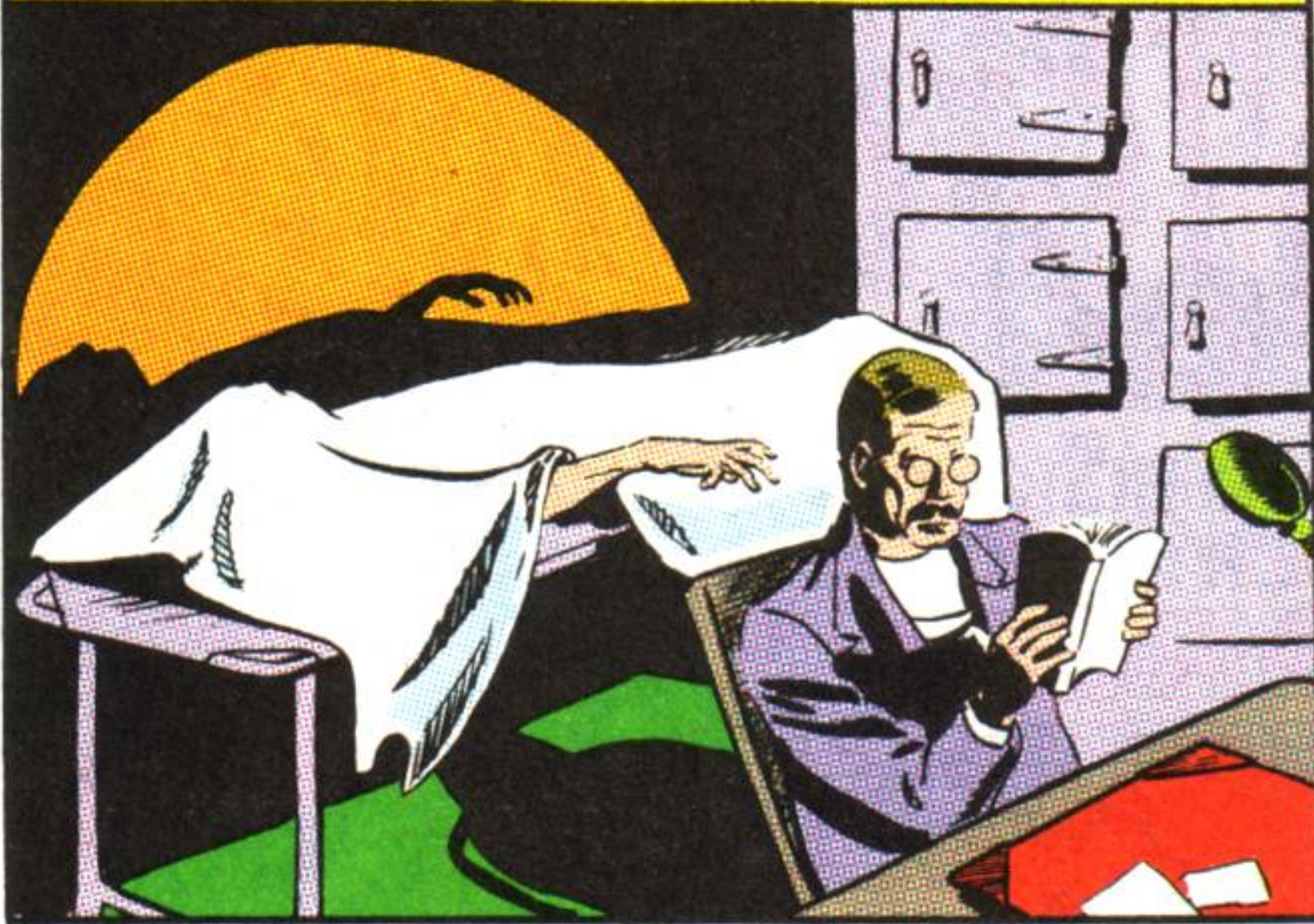
FOUND THIS STIFF IN
A BACK ALLEY, DEAD AS
CAN BE!

HEY, JED, THIS
PLACE SURE IS
QUIET!

YEAH, IT'S QUIET ALL RIGHT!
ANYWAY, THE CUSTOMERS
DON'T COMPLAIN! HEH,
HEH, HEH!



THE MEN LEFT, AND QUIET REIGNED, BROKEN ONLY BY THE TICK-TOCK OF THE CLOCK... BUT BEHIND JED'S BACK A GRISLY SCENE WAS BEING ENACTED...



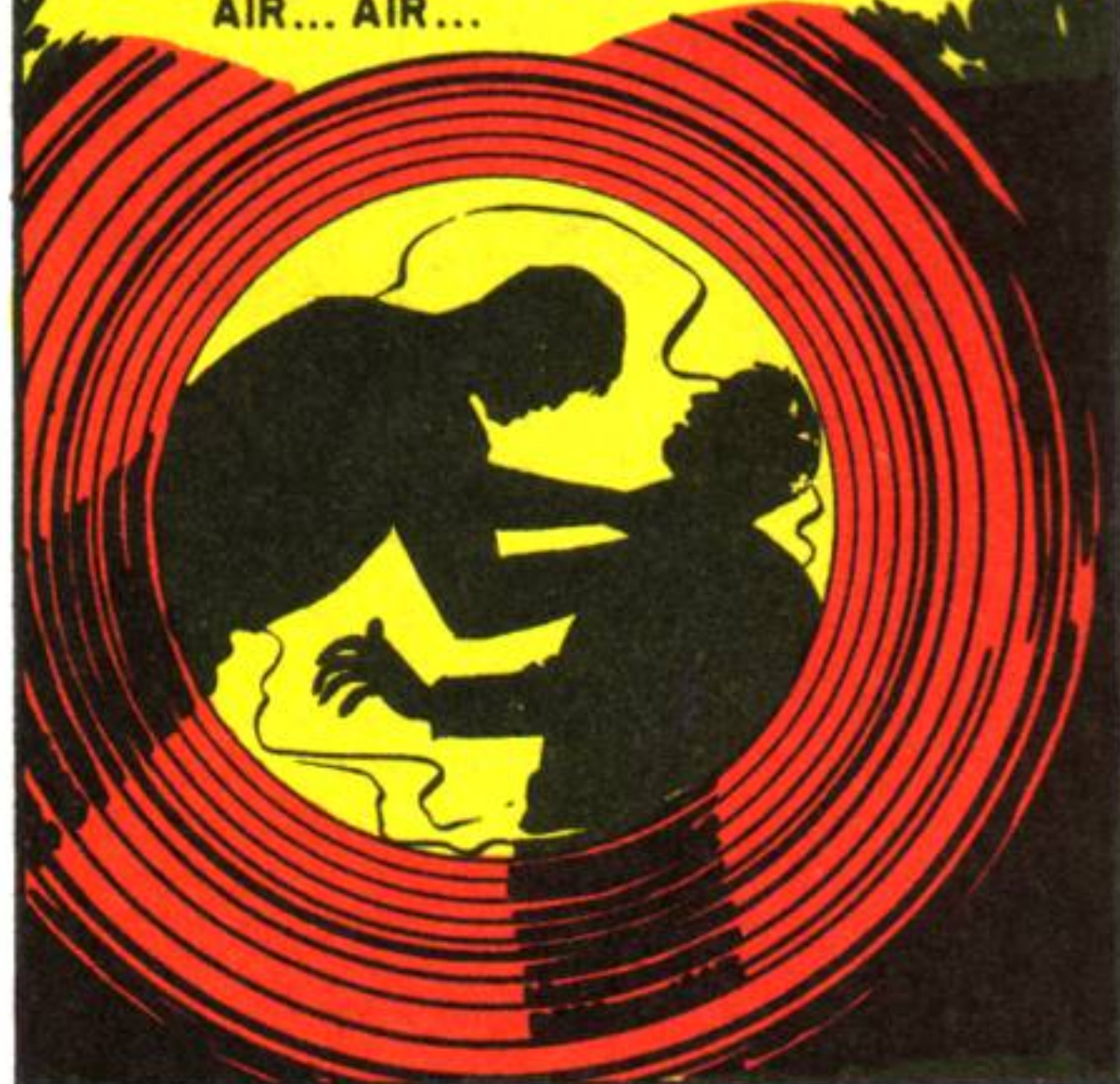
SUDDENLY THE DEATHLY STILLNESS WAS BROKEN BY A WEIRD BUBBLING SCREAM FROM THE LONG-DEAD CORPSE! ICY FINGERS CLUTCHED AT JED'S THROAT...



NO! DON'T TOUCH ME GUGGGH!!



JED'S STRAINING HEART POUNDED UNMERCIFULLY AS THE TERRIBLE CLAMMY HANDS SQUEEZED HIS THROAT! AS HE SANK DOWN INTO STYGIAN DEPTHS HE GASPED... AIR... AIR...



SLOWLY CONSCIOUSNESS CAME AS JED RETURNED FROM THE VERY BRINK OF MADNESS! HIS THROBBING EYES WILDLY SEARCHED THE ROOM...THE CORPSE WAS GONE!



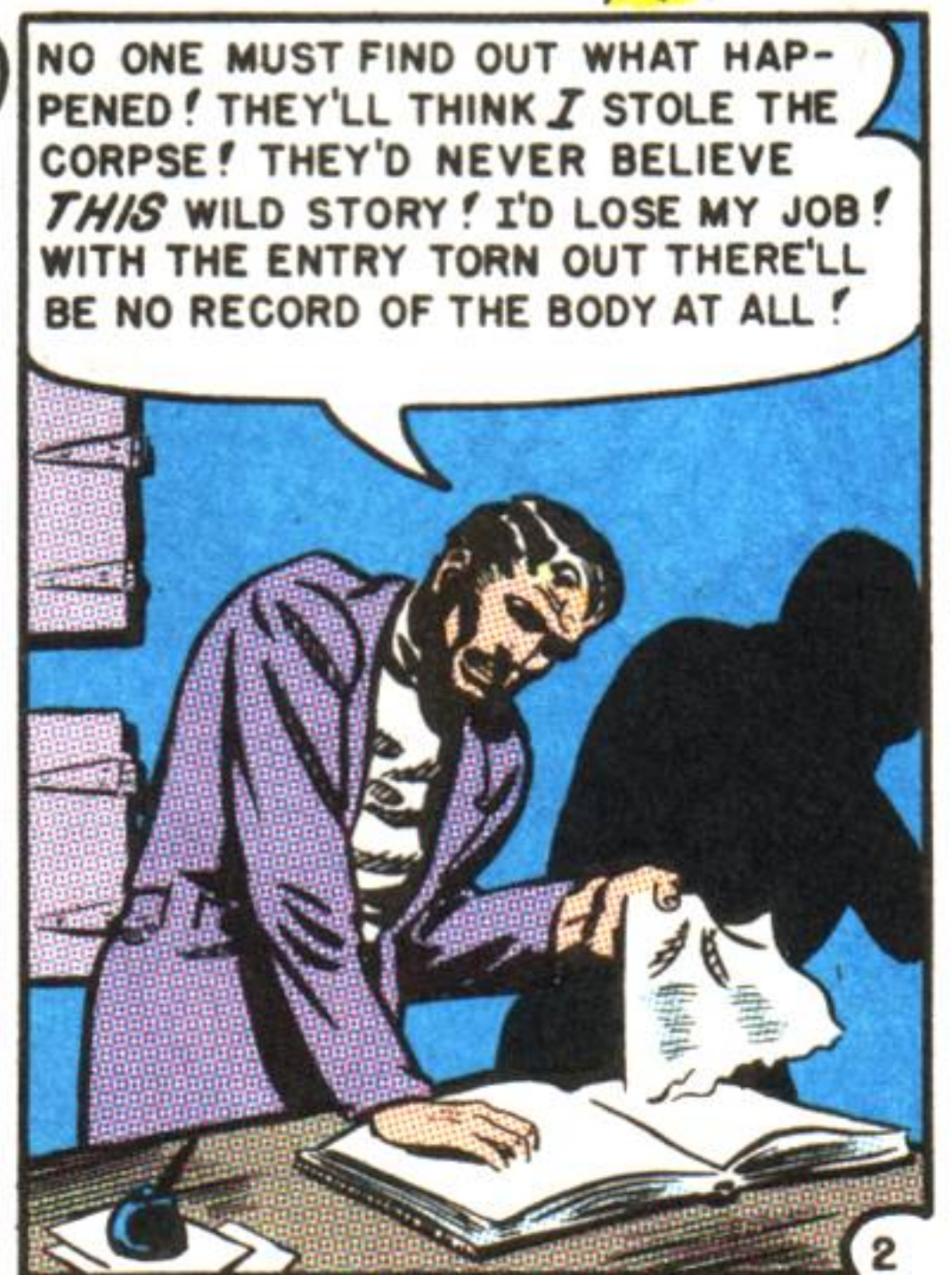
MY THROAT-- GASP! OH, THE PAIN... WATER... WATER!

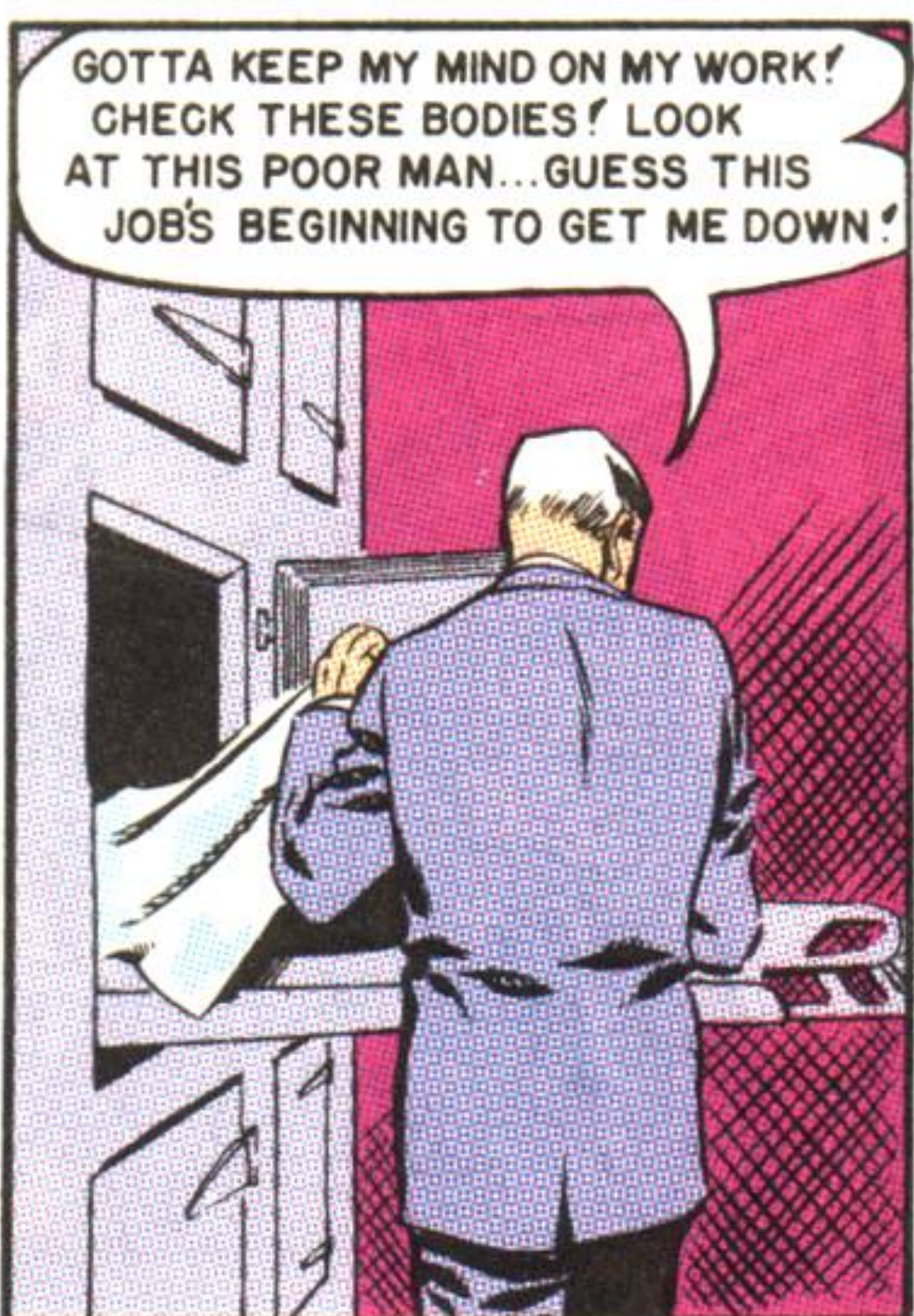
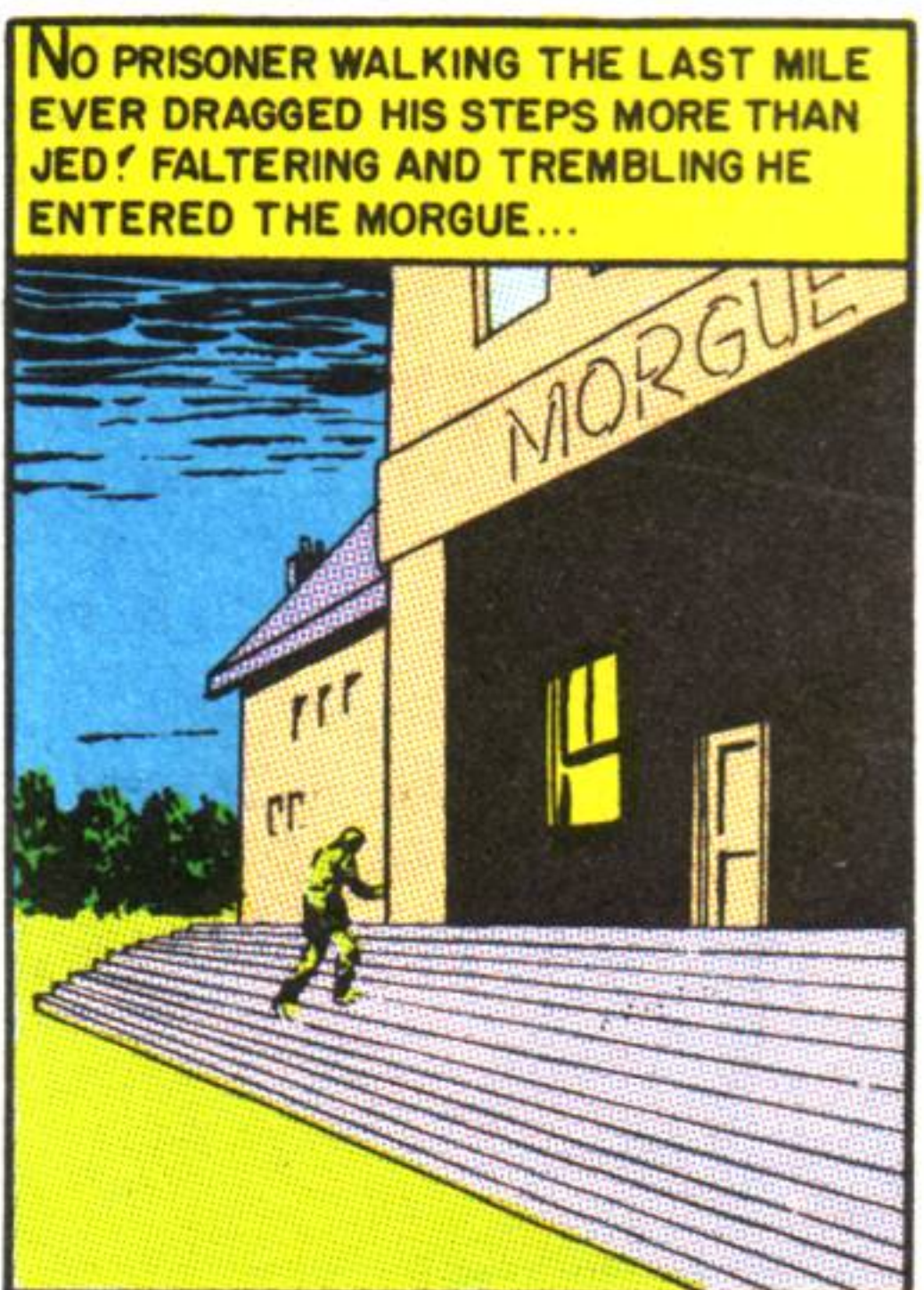


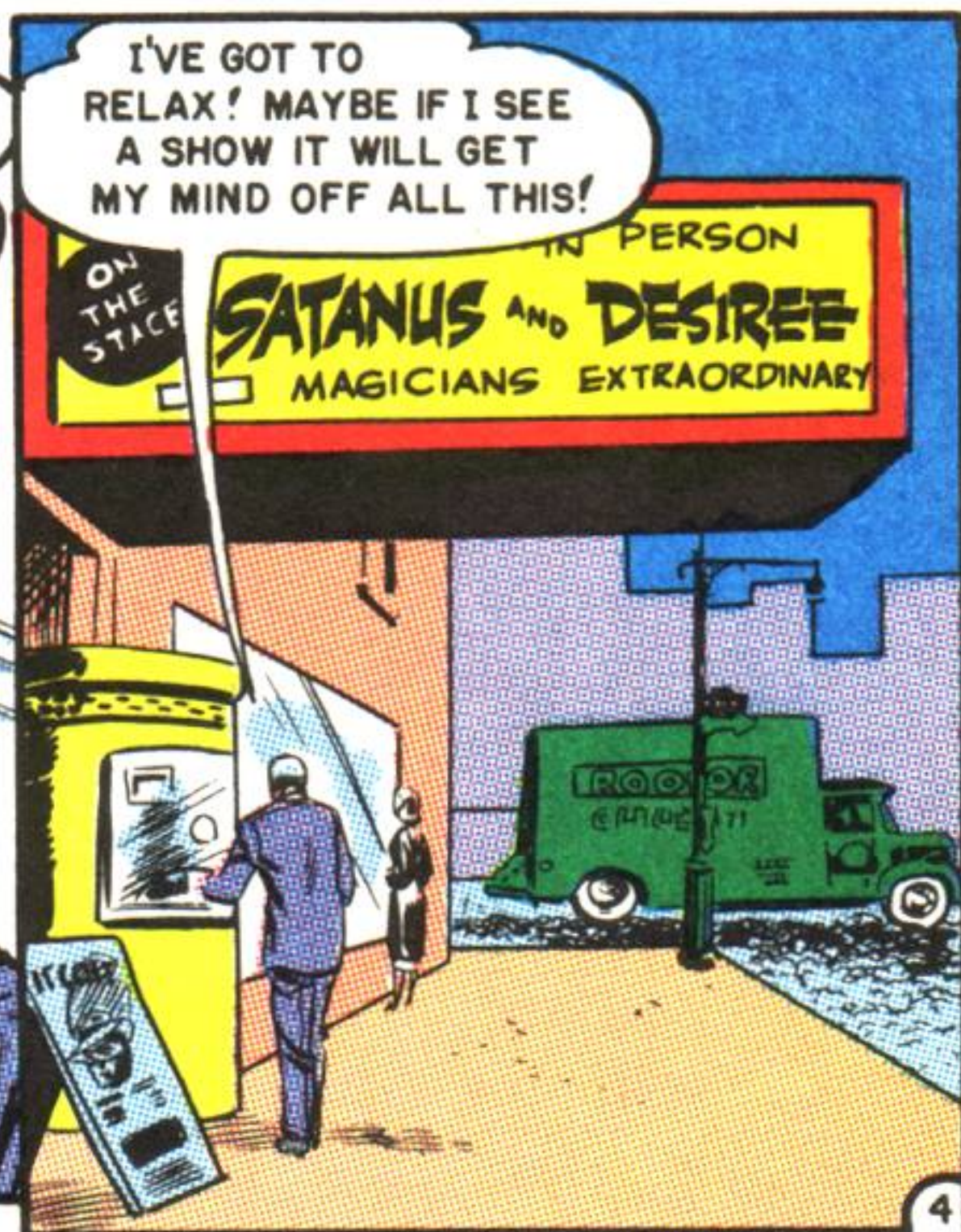
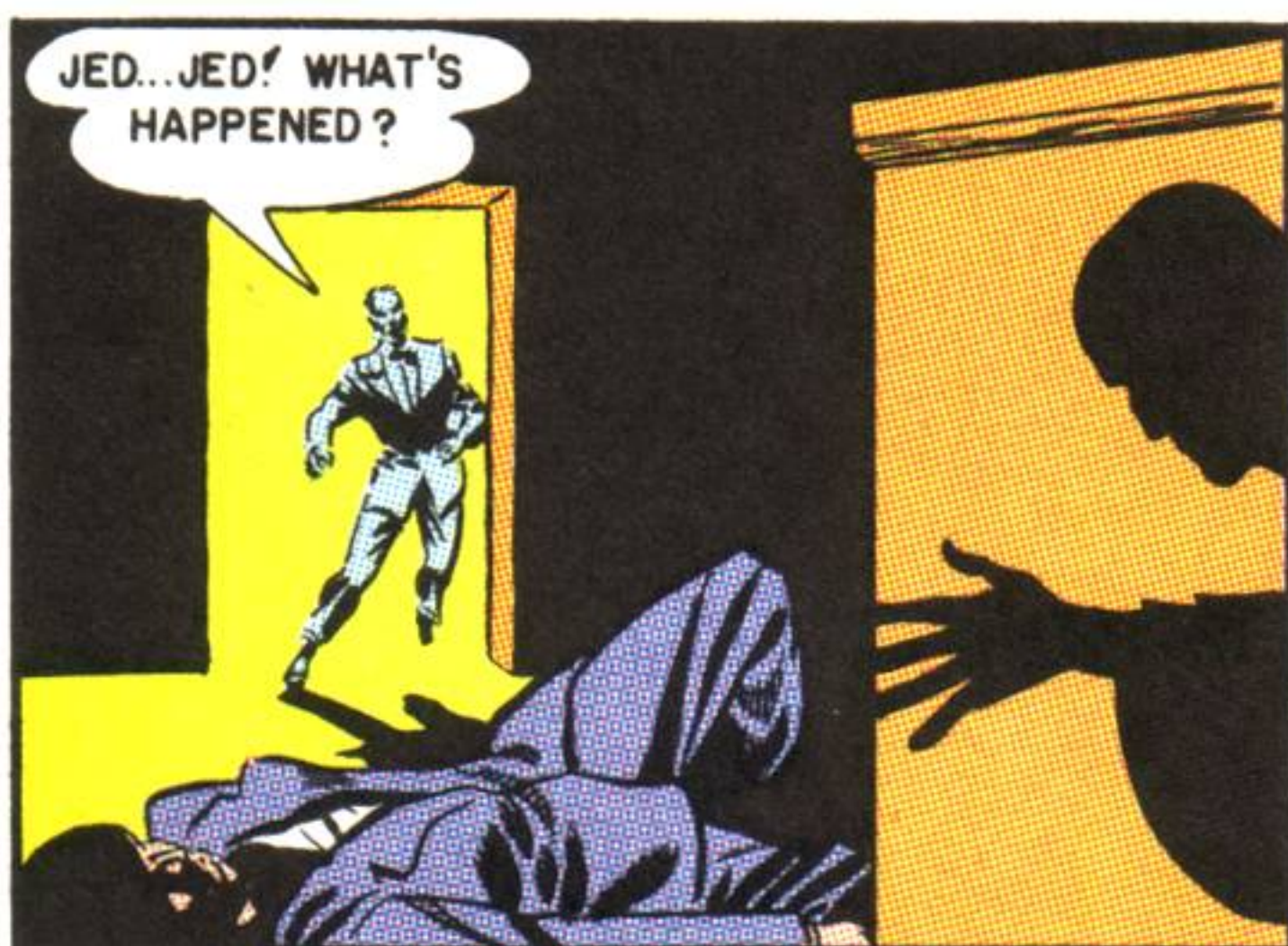
A LIVING CORPSE... O-H-H! MY HAIR... MY HAIR! GOOD HEAVENS, I'M GOING MAD! MAD!



NO ONE MUST FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED! THEY'LL THINK I STOLE THE CORPSE! THEY'D NEVER BELIEVE THIS WILD STORY! I'D LOSE MY JOB! WITH THE ENTRY TORN OUT THERE'LL BE NO RECORD OF THE BODY AT ALL!



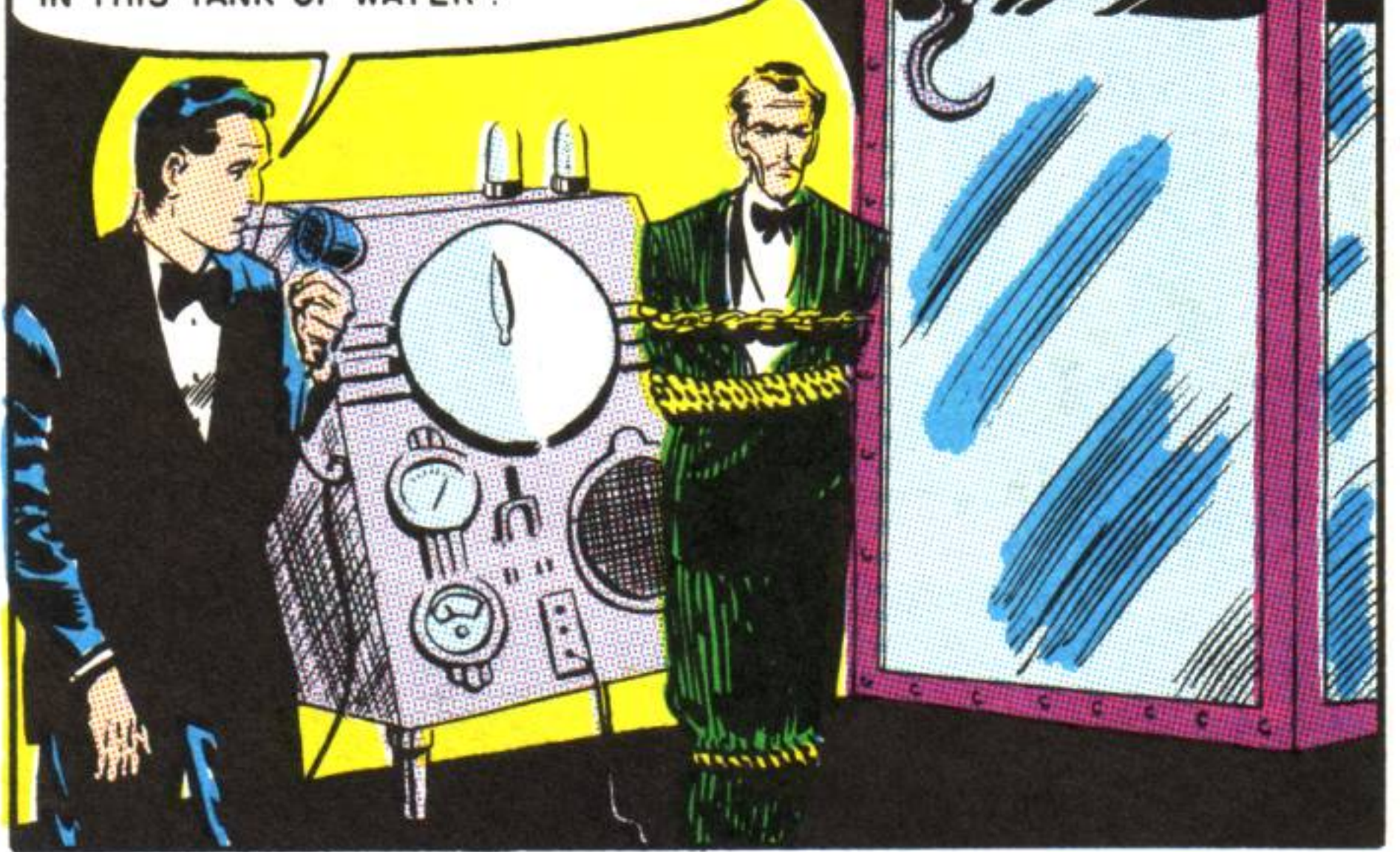




LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I REGRET THAT MY PARTNER, THE BEAUTIFUL DESIREE, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO APPEAR TONIGHT! BUT STILL, I WILL ATTEMPT MY MOST AMAZING FEAT! QUIET PLEASE!



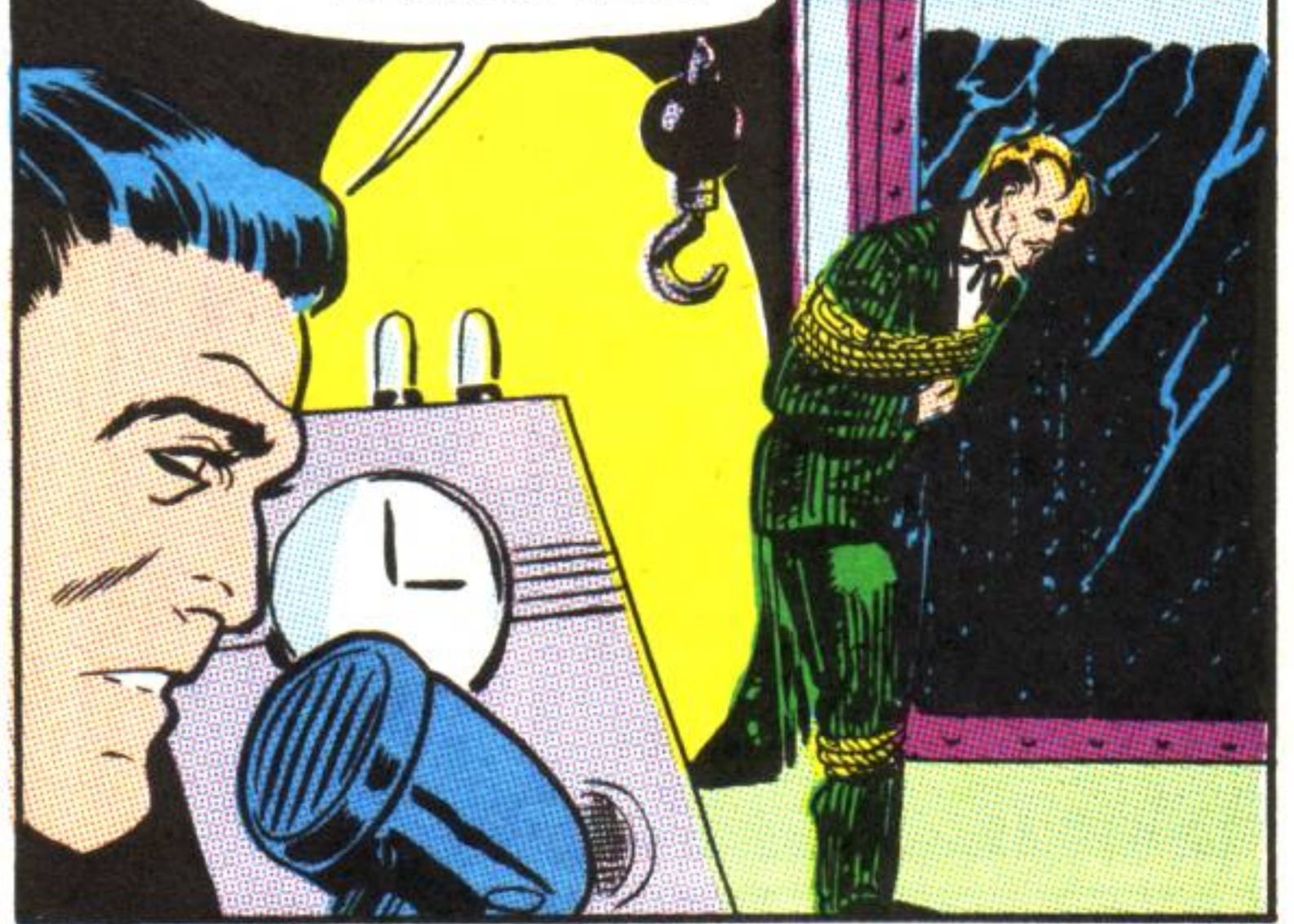
AND NOW, SATANUS WILL DO... THE *IMPOSSIBLE!* FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE CLOCK-- SATANUS WILL REMAIN *SUBMERGED* IN THIS TANK OF WATER!



TWO AND A HALF MINUTES GONE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! YOU CAN HEAR HIS HEARTBEATS FROM THIS SENSITIVE MICROPHONE STRAPPED TO HIS CHEST! LISTEN! THEY'VE STOPPED! SATANUS-- HE'S *DEAD!*



THE FIFTEEN MINUTES ARE UP! HIS HEARTBEATS HAVE RESUMED! SATANUS RETURNS-- *ALIVE*-- FROM HIS WATERY GRAVE! SATANUS-- THE ONLY MAN TODAY WHO CAN CONTROL HIS BREATHING AND HEARTBEATS SO AS TO APPEAR DEAD!



NO, NO! I CAN'T STAND IT! I'M HAUNTED BY *DEATH!* WHY CAN'T THEY LEAVE ME ALONE!



BETTER GET BACK TO WORK. I DON'T DARE STAY AWAY ANY LONGER! THEY MIGHT SUSPECT SOMETHING!



I'LL BE OKAY NOW, TIM. YOU CAN GO, AND THANKS!

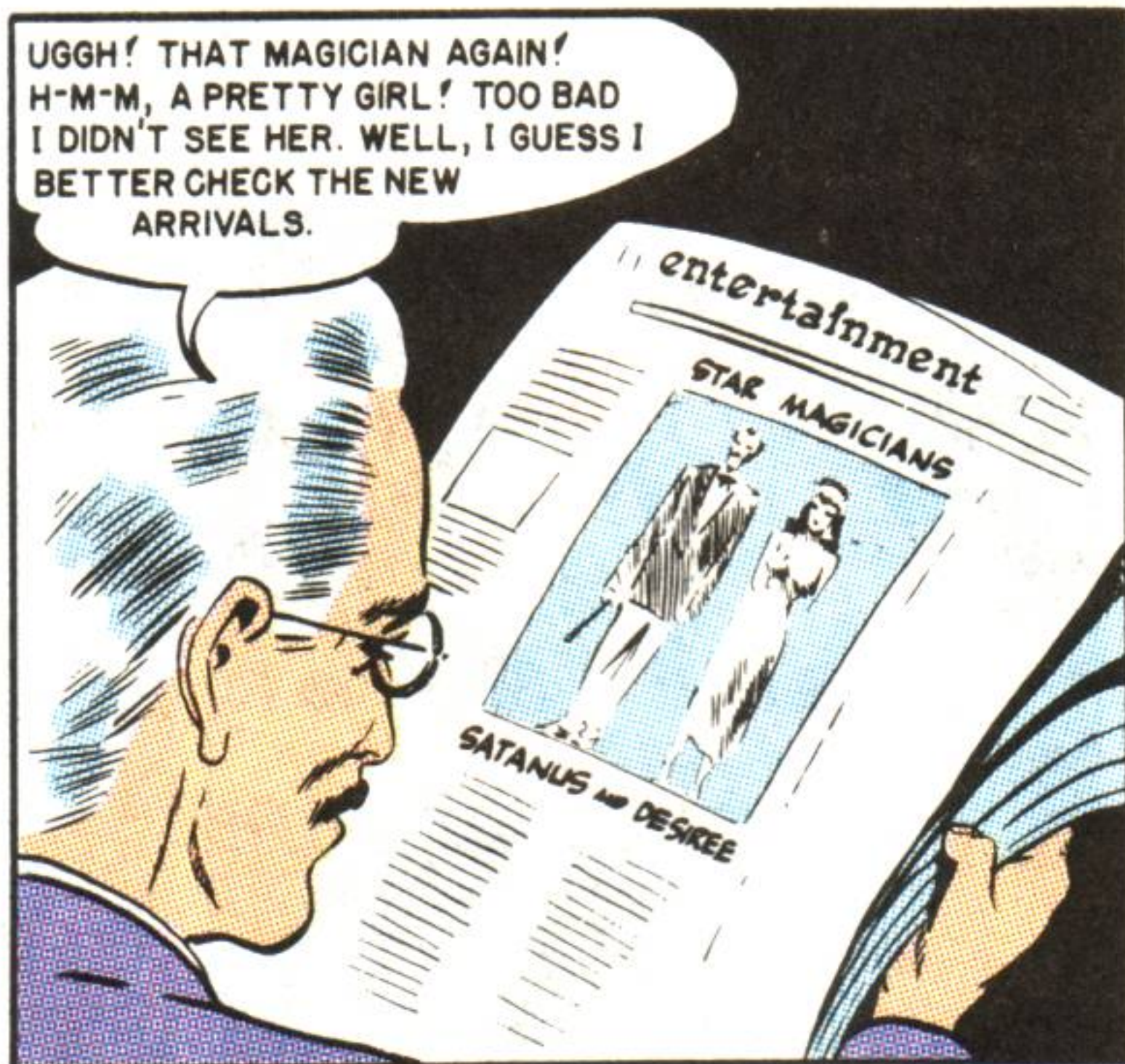


IF YOU'RE SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT! GOOD-NIGHT!





BETTER RELAX AWHILE.
GUESS I'LL READ THE EVENING
PAPER!



UGGH! THAT MAGICIAN AGAIN!
H-M-M, A PRETTY GIRL! TOO BAD
I DIDN'T SEE HER. WELL, I GUESS I
BETTER CHECK THE NEW
ARRIVALS.



WH-WHY! IT'S THAT GIRL--DESIREE,
THE MAGICIAN'S PARTNER! LET'S SEE
THE CARD! DEATH INSTANTANEOUS...
CAUSED BY A BLOW ON JAW! TOO BAD!



HERE'S ANOTHER
ONE!

THAT MARK ON HER CHIN--
A SNAKE! I WONDER WHAT...

WH-WHAT? OH, JUST
LEAVE IT ON THE TABLE!



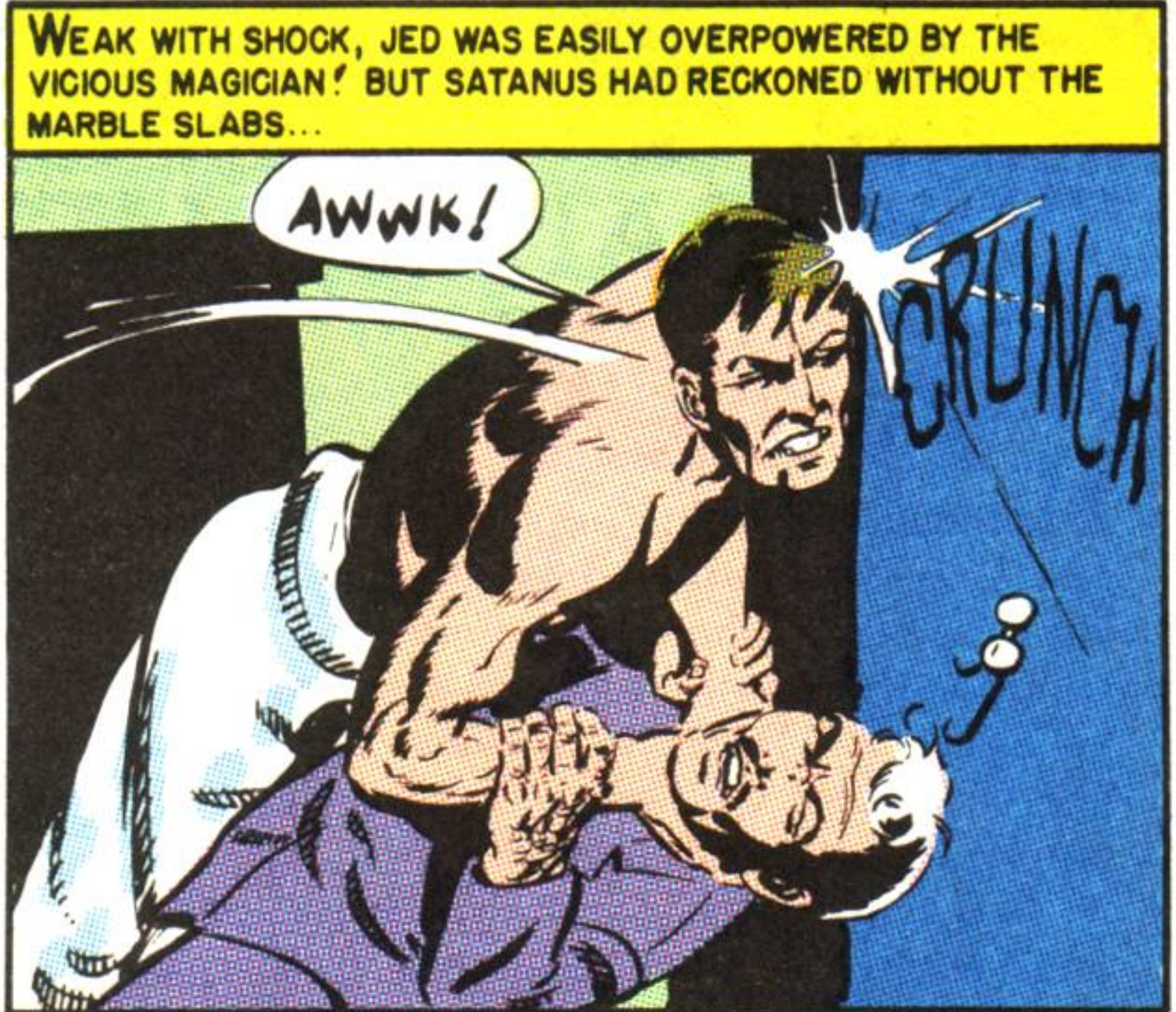
IF SHE WAS HIT...A
RING MIGHT HAVE...MADE
THAT MARK...A SNAKE...



YEEOWW!
THAT
RING!



IT'S HE...SATANUS, THE LIVING
CORPSE...WITHOUT HIS BEARD
AND MOUSTACHE! HE MUST
HAVE KILLED THE GIRL! HE'S...





PORTRAIT OF LIFE...AND *DEATH!*

Rollini touched his paint-brush to the palette . . . and as he withdrew it and turned toward his easel there was a strange glint to his eyes. His mouth hardened momentarily as he scrutinized the canvas before him . . . then his flesh filled with color and his eyes widened as if with wild delight.

"This will be the painting to enshrine my name forever," he thought, his chest rising and falling with great rapidity, as if inwardly he were going through some strange and tremendous exertion. "This will be a token of my great talent," he thought. And his eye moved from the flaming, tempestuous colors of the canvas to the woman who stood across the room from him. There could be no uncertainty about it . . . the canvas was an exact duplicate of the living woman . . . but there was a bizarre, almost a ghostly difference. For the woman appeared to be bloodless, even the pigmentation of her hair appeared to have begun to seep from her. If anything, the portrait was more lifelike than the living woman who was posing for it.

"It was wise of me," Rollini murmured to himself as his brush flashed and stabbed at the canvas, now applying the magenta, now the deep rich brown. "Wise of me to marry my model . . . so that I could bring her here to my garret without fear of talk behind my back."

The picture was nearing the great moment of completion, and Rollini worked with redoubled speed, completely engrossed now in the portrait of his wife. "She has not left the garret in weeks," he thought to himself as he worked on, never tiring in his labors, never ceasing . . . his eye flashing from model to canvas . . . from canvas to model. "Since I started this great portrait of my wife, she has been a virtual prisoner! For I cannot let her interfere with the mood that has seized me . . . cannot let her break the spell which enables me to put on canvas the very crystallization of what she is, what she lives for! For this portrait will **BE** life to all those who see it!"

He hunched forward more than ever now . . . the end was clearly in sight. Another dab at the sharp line of the eyebrows . . . a stroke at the cupid's bow mouth . . . and he would have transferred all that his young wife was to the canvas!

He turned once again to the spot where the living woman sat for a last sweeping view . . . and suddenly he was shocked by her sight. For in the few short weeks he had been working on her portrait she had visibly aged. Suddenly he was aware of her pallid complexion, of her wax-like skin. He **MUST** finish now . . . must **HURRY!**

And then it was *finished!* With a roar of triumph he threw his brush and palette to the floor. "This is the great work of my life, little one," he shouted, "and I could not have done it without **YOU!** For it is **LIFE** . . . life transferred to canvas!"

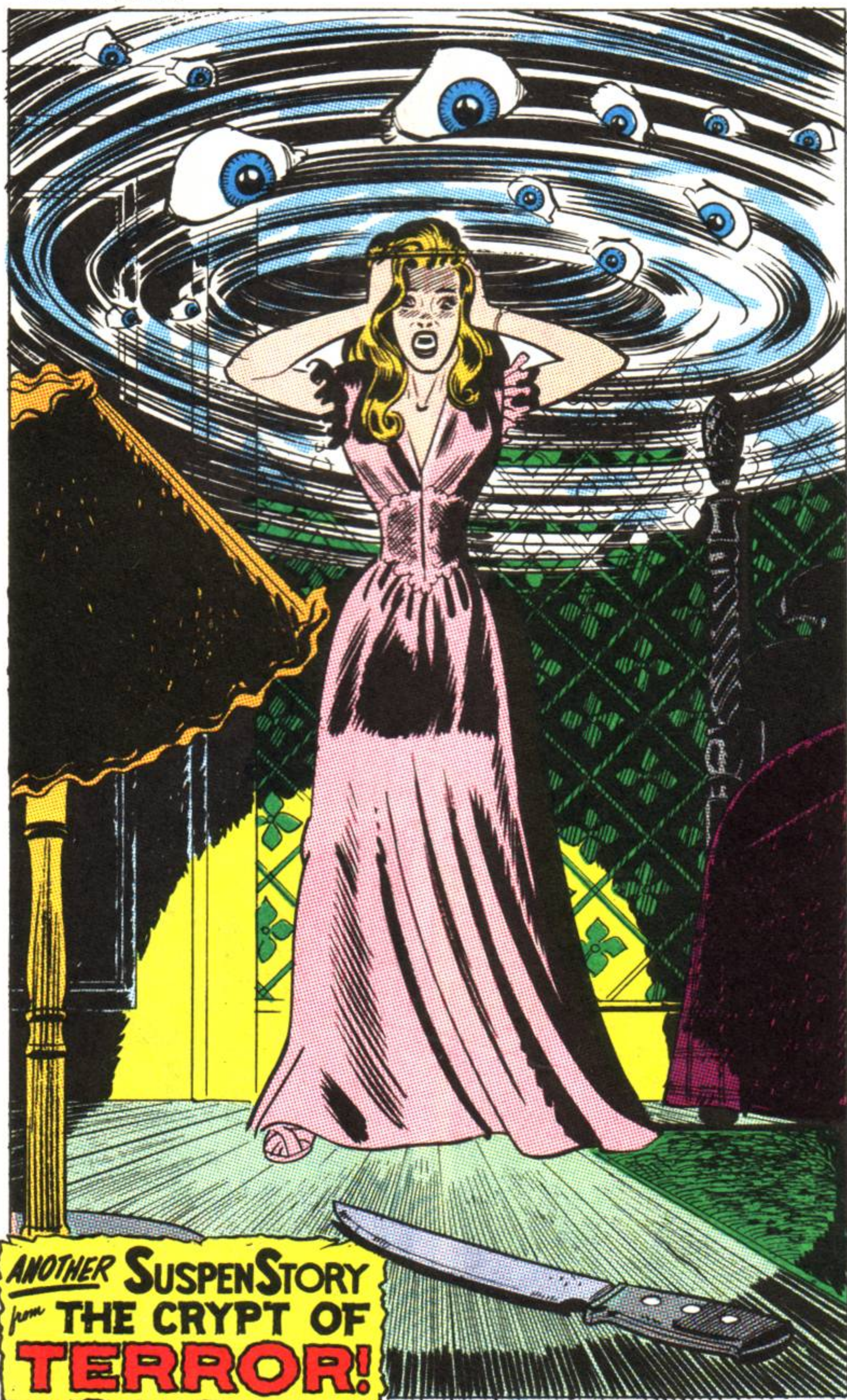
And he turned at that moment, and his eyes grew wide with wonder . . . then bewilderment . . . then stark fear! A light seemed to dim and burn out behind his eyes! A mad look came over him. There, on the other side of the room, his wife lay dead where she had fallen from the spot in which she had posed! And she was old . . . as old as the portrait was young! Rollini had succeeded . . . he had taken his wife's life . . . and put it on canvas!



THOSE LIGHTS MRS. MANDER THOUGHT SHE SAW FLICKERING IN THE NIGHT... THE GHASTLY WAIL SHE WAS *POSITIVE* SHE HEARD... THE DOG WITH ITS THROAT SLASHED BY THE VERY KNIFE SHE FOUND AT THE FOOT OF HER BED... ALL OF IT COULD MEAN ONLY *ONE* THING! THERE WAS...

MADNESS

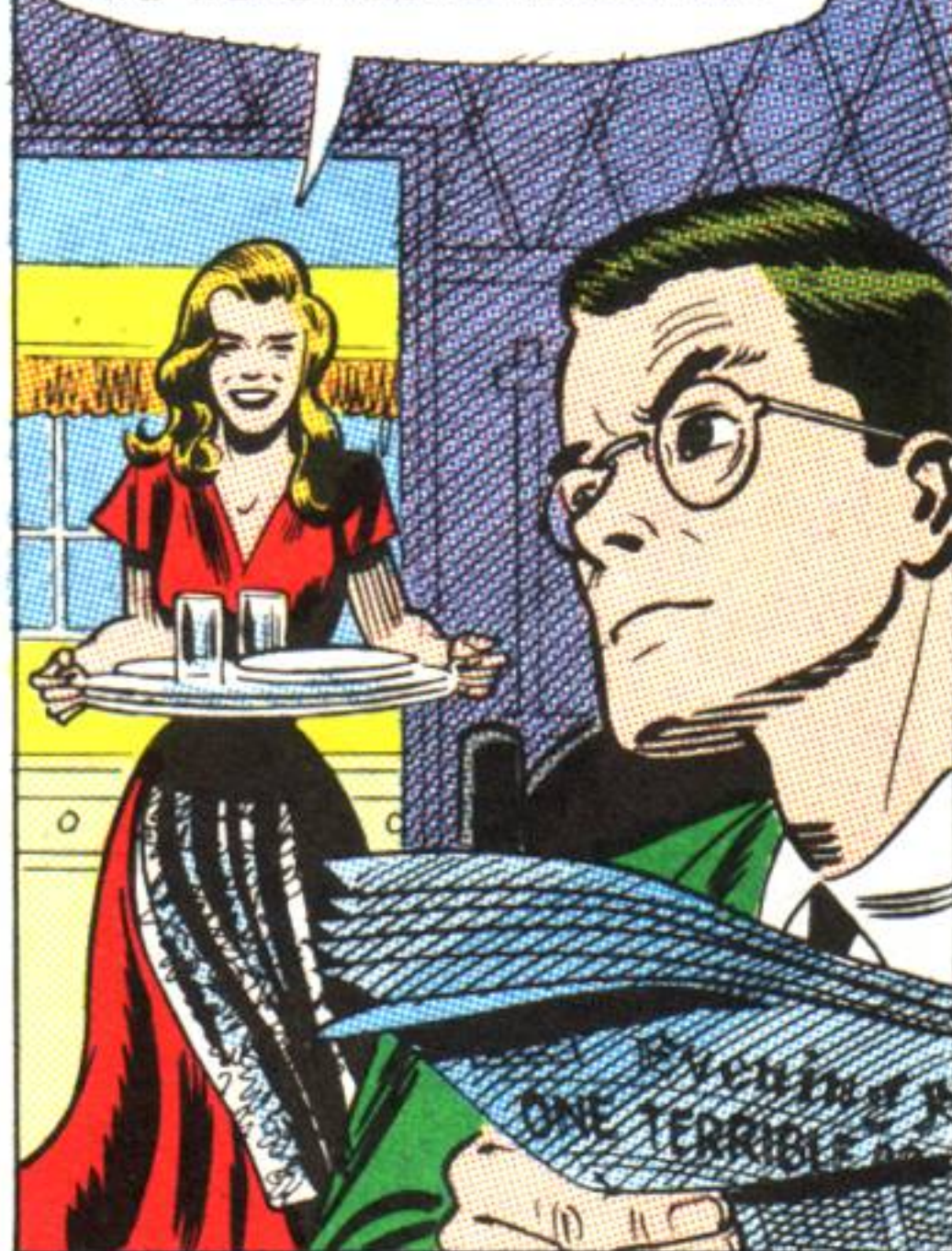
at MANDERVILLE



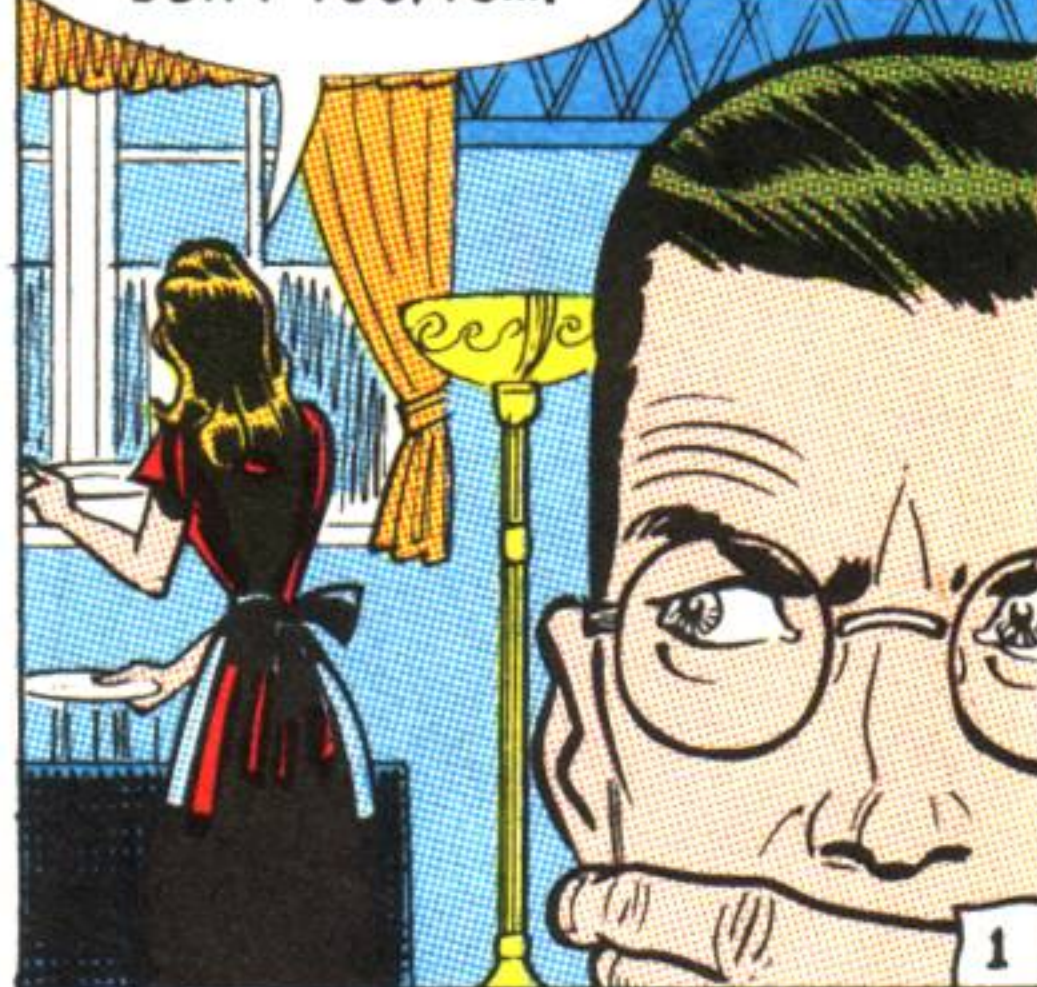
ANOTHER SUSPENSE STORY
from THE CRYPT OF
TERROR!

MANDERVILLE SEEMED LIKE EVERY OTHER HOUSE IN ITS NEIGHBORHOOD ...BUT THERE WAS *ONE* STARTLING DIFFERENCE...

I GAVE THE SERVANTS THE NIGHT OFF, TOM...THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MORE LIKE OLD TIMES IF I PREPARED THE MEAL... AND WE WERE ALONE TOGETHER!



EVER SINCE THAT TERRIBLE ACCIDENT... WHEN WE LOST YOUNG BILLY... I'VE FELT A GREAT CHANGE TAKING PLACE! IT'S AS IF MY MIND WAS UNDERGOING SOME SORT OF METAMORPHOSIS! YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU, TOM?



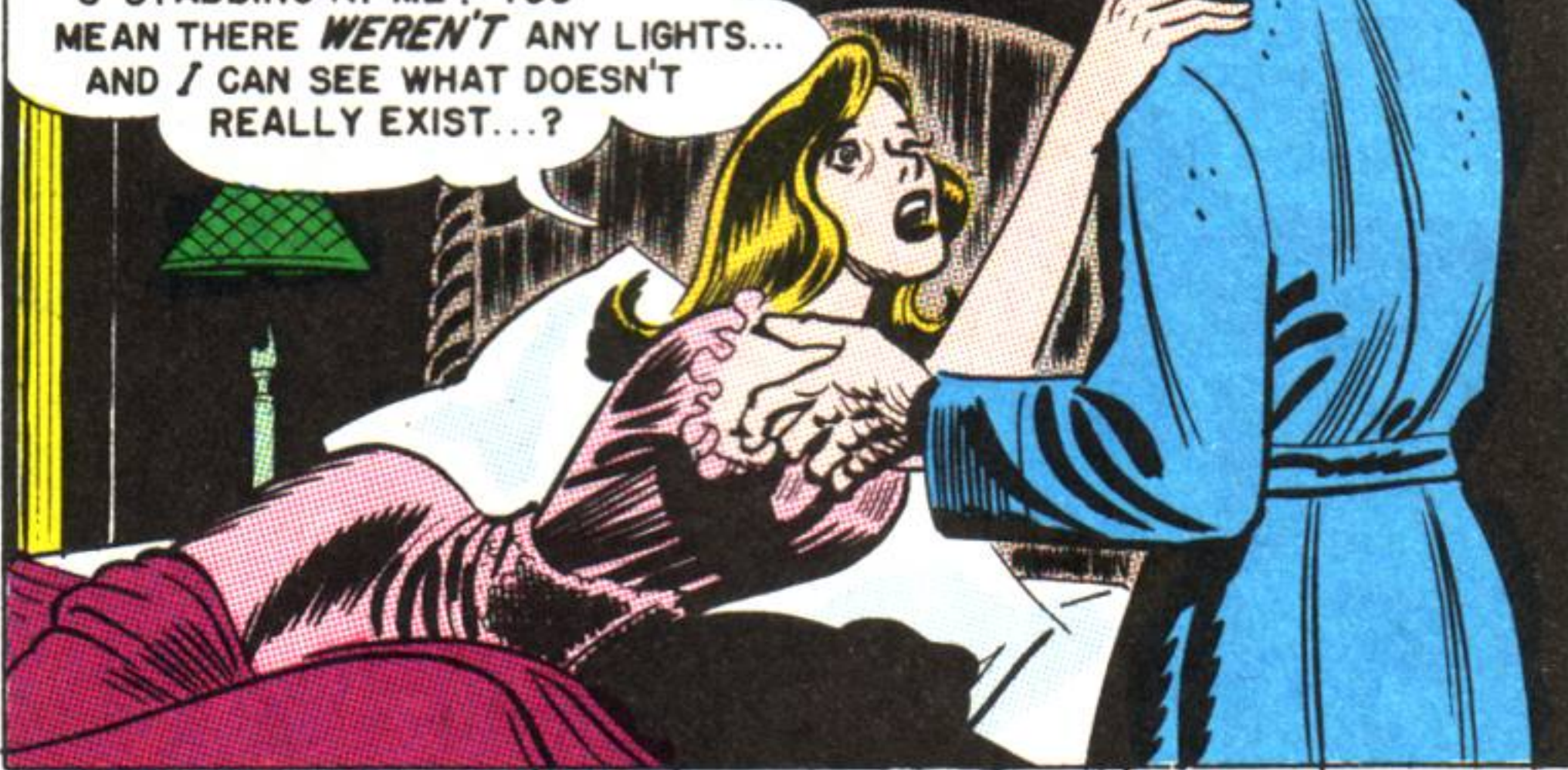


THE HOURS PASSED IN THAT STRANGE HOUSE CALLED MANDERVILLE. AND THEN...

T-TOM...TOM...*TOM!*
THE LIGHTS...T-THEY BLINDED ME!
COMING IN THROUGH THE WINDOW...
COMING C-CLOSER...*CLOSER!*



Y-YOU DIDN'T SEE ANY LIGHTS
FLASHING THROUGH THE WINDOW...
S-STABBING AT ME? YOU
MEAN THERE *WEREN'T* ANY LIGHTS...
AND I CAN SEE WHAT DOESN'T
REALLY EXIST...?



WHAT LIGHTS, MARION? I DON'T SEE ANYTHING... NOTHING OUT OF THE
ORDINARY, ANYWAY! AND I'VE BEEN TOSSING AND TURNING...
COULDN'T SEEM TO DOZE OFF! SO THAT I WAS AWAKE
AND WOULD HAVE SEEN...



OF COURSE THAT ISN'T WHAT I MEANT,
MARION... AND FROM THIS POSITION I
CAN SEE THOSE LIGHTS TOO! THEY'RE
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
YOU JUST FOR-
GET THEM!



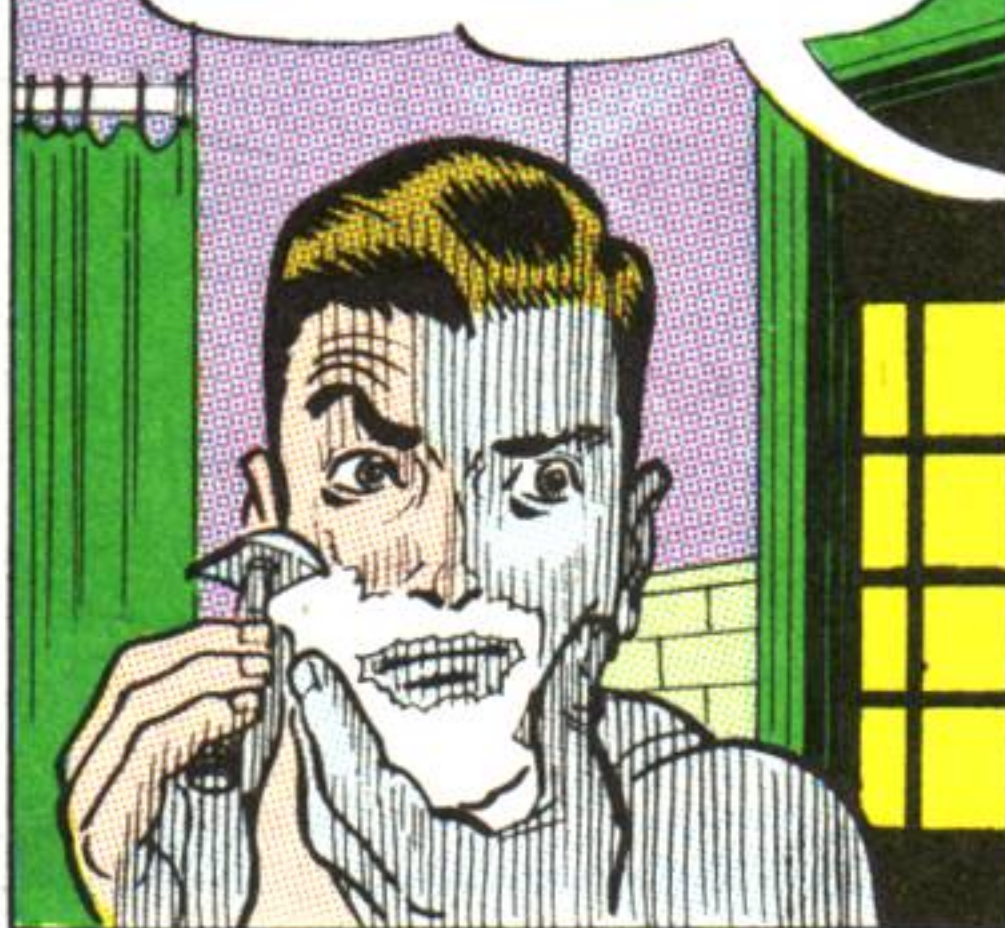
SOB: I FEEL AS
IF SOMETHING
AWFUL IS
HAPPENING TO
ME... AND THERE'S
NOTHING... SOB: ...
THAT I
CAN
DO...

S-SINCE THE ACCIDENT IN WHICH BILLY
WAS KILLED... S-SHE'S BECOMING
WORSE AND WORSE! THE TERRIBLE
STRAIN... IT MUST HAVE AFFECTED
HER MIND! SHE'S IN A BAD WAY... SEE-
ING LIGHTS THAT AREN'T THERE...!



THE DREADED NIGHT PASSED, AND
ONCE AGAIN IT WAS MORNING AT
MANDERVILLE...

A COUPLE OF HOURS SLEEP HAVE HELP-
ED ME, TOM... NO WONDER A PERSON
THINKS SHE'S GOING OUT OF HER MIND,
THOUGH... WITH TERRIBLE NOISES
LIKE THAT WAIL JUST NOW!



W-WAIL? YOU
MEAN YOU
HEARD A SCREAM
OR SOMETHING
JUST NOW?

Y-YOU DIDN'T HEAR
IT... THAT NOISE
LIKE A SIREN?
D-DIDN'T HEAR
ANYTHING?



THIS IS FAR MORE SERIOUS THAN I FEARED! MARION MUST BE IN REALLY BAD SHAPE! AS SOON AS I FINISH AT THE OFFICE... I'D BETTER HURRY HOME! AND IF SHE WANDERS BACK INTO THE KITCHEN... NO TELLING *WHAT* SHE MAY PUT IN THE FOOD! BETTER HAVE A WORD WITH DOCTOR BRENNER NEXT DOOR!



THE DAYLIGHT HOURS SEEMED INTERMINABLE TO TOM MANDER... BUT AT LAST HE WAS BACK AT MANDERVILLE... AND THE EVENING HAD PASSED WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT...

COME UP AS SOON AS YOU'VE FINISHED YOUR PAPER, TOM...

SHE *DOES* SEEM BETTER, TONIGHT! HER SPIRITS HAVE LIFTED... AND THESE CURIOUS THINGS SHE SEES AND HEARS... M-MAYBE THEY'VE DISAPPEARED!



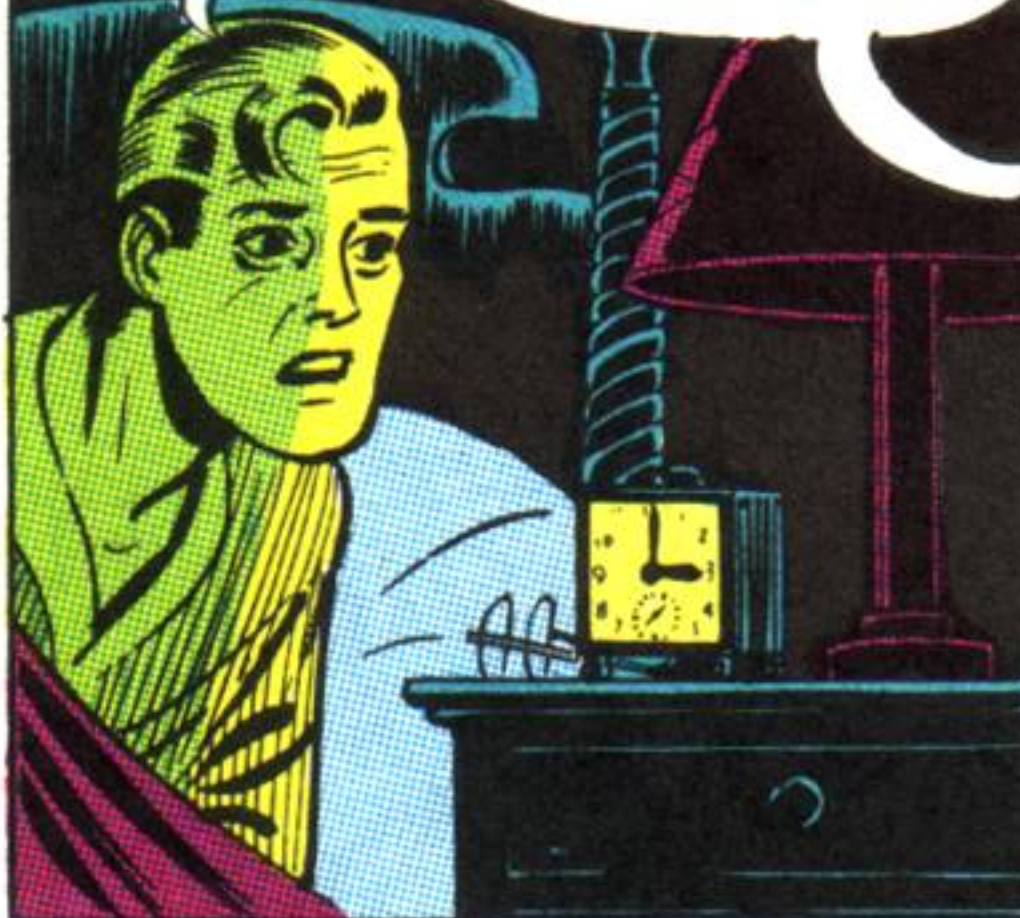
THAT WILD, INSANE LOOK... IT SEEMS TO HAVE GONE FROM HER EYES! THE STRAIN OF BILLY'S DEATH... IT MAY BE WEARING OFF AT LAST! I'VE ASKED DOCTOR BRENNER TO STOP IN TOMORROW... PERHAPS HE'LL FIND HER ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY!



THE MINUTES TICKED BY ON THE CLOCK AT TOM MANDER'S ELBOW... THEY STRETCHED INTO AN HOUR... TWO HOURS...

W-WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MARION?

GO BACK TO SLEEP, DARLING... I'M THIRSTY... GOING TO GET A GLASS OF WATER...



TOM MANDER WAS IN NO MOOD FOR SLEEP... QUIETLY HE WATCHED HIS WIFE CROSS THE ROOM... ALERT FOR ANY OUTBREAKS ON HER PART... ANXIOUSLY WATCHING FOR SIGNS OF AN ONGOING SPELL...

NOTHING FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT, TOM... I-IT'S JUST THAT I'M TERRIBLY... RESTLESS... TONIGHT!



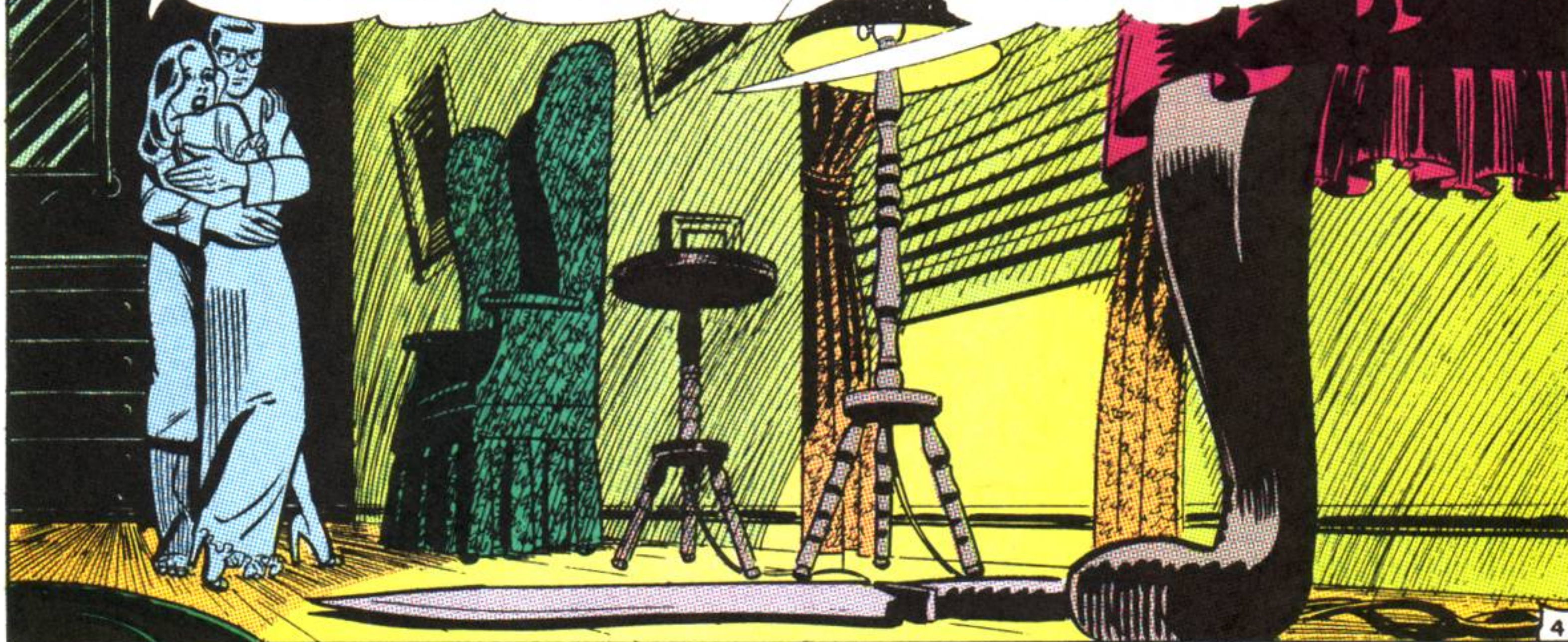
T-TOM! GOOD HEAVENS! I... I... FEEL FAINT!

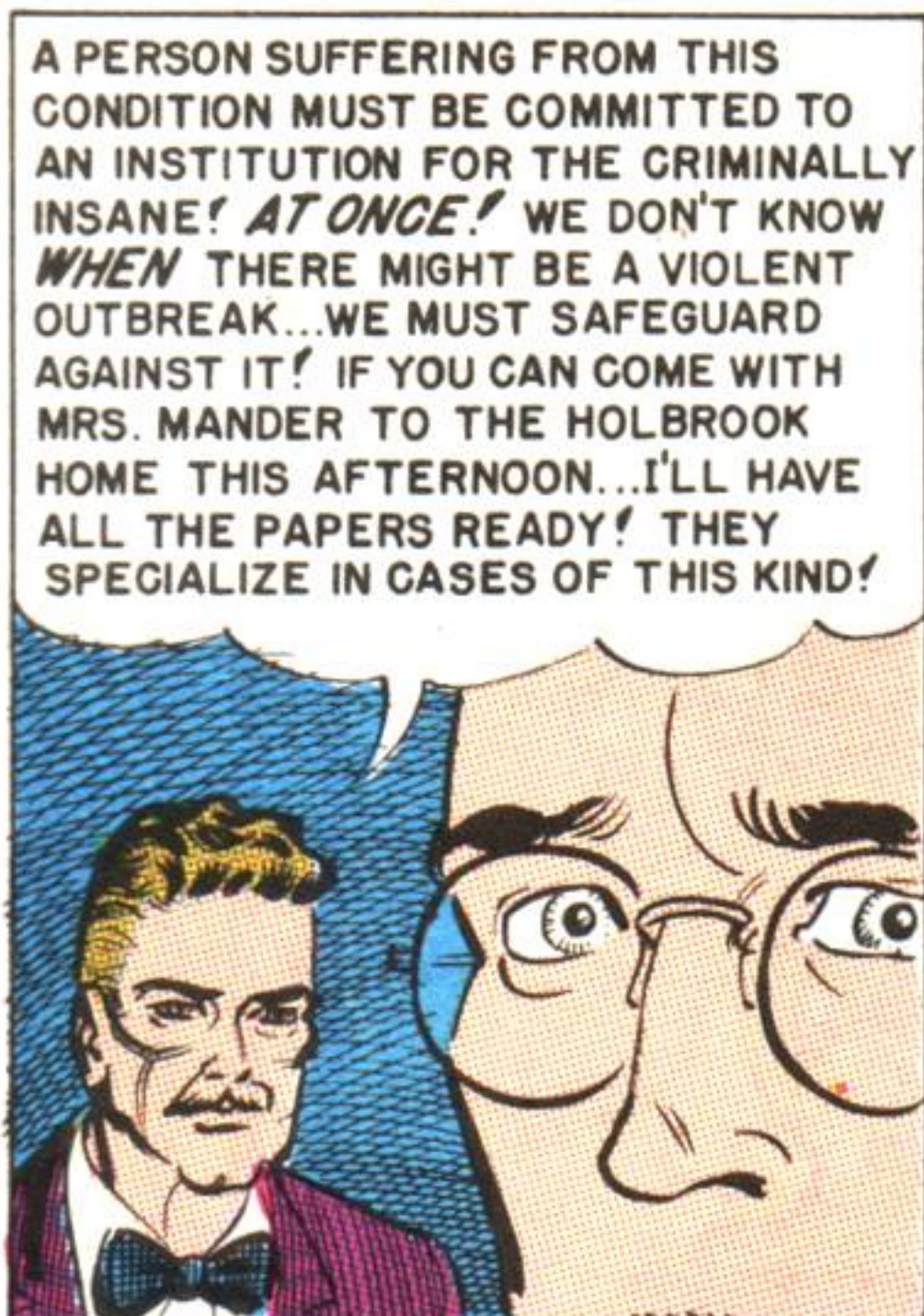
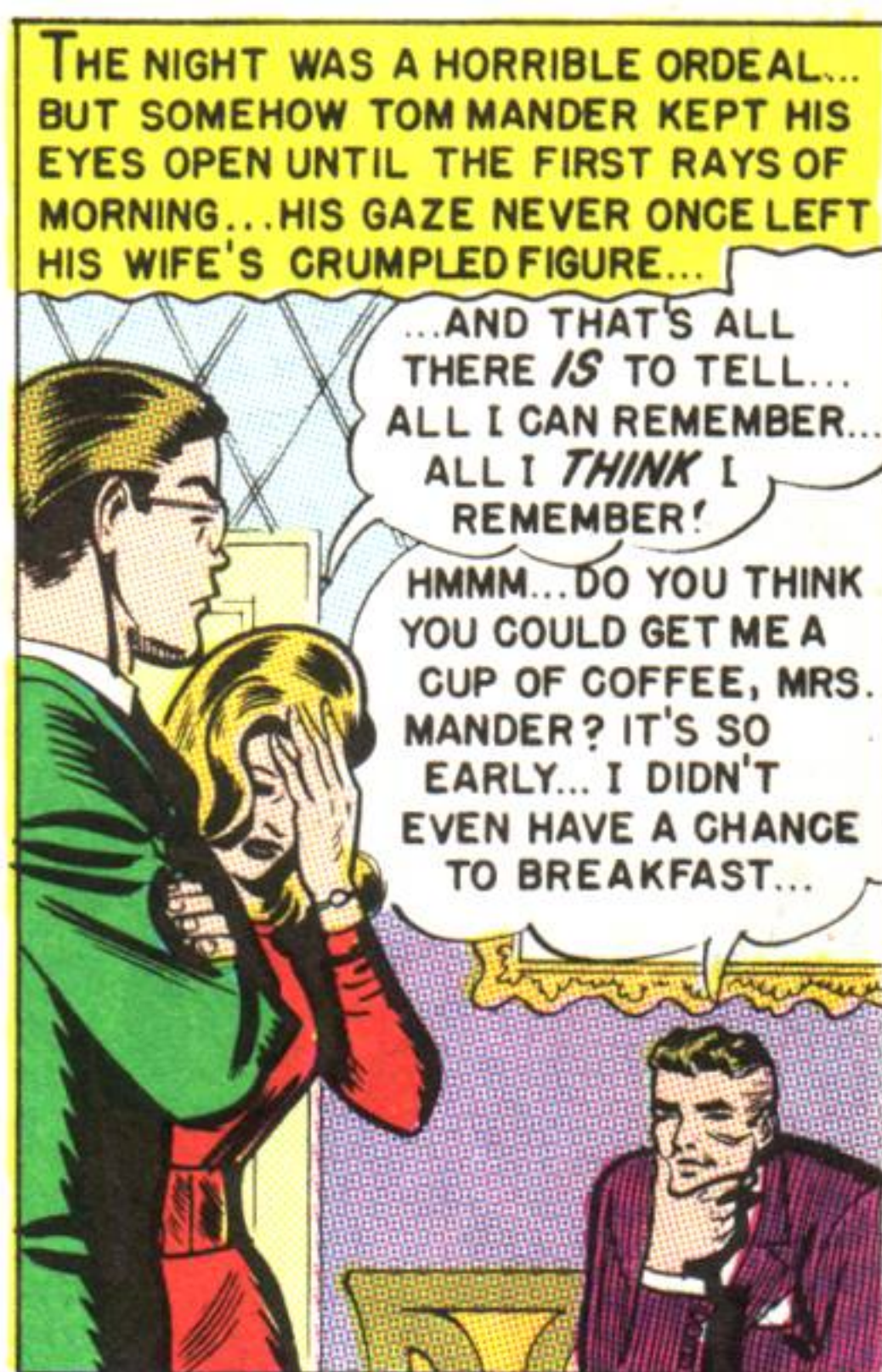
W-WHAT IS IT, MARION? *WHAT IS IT?*

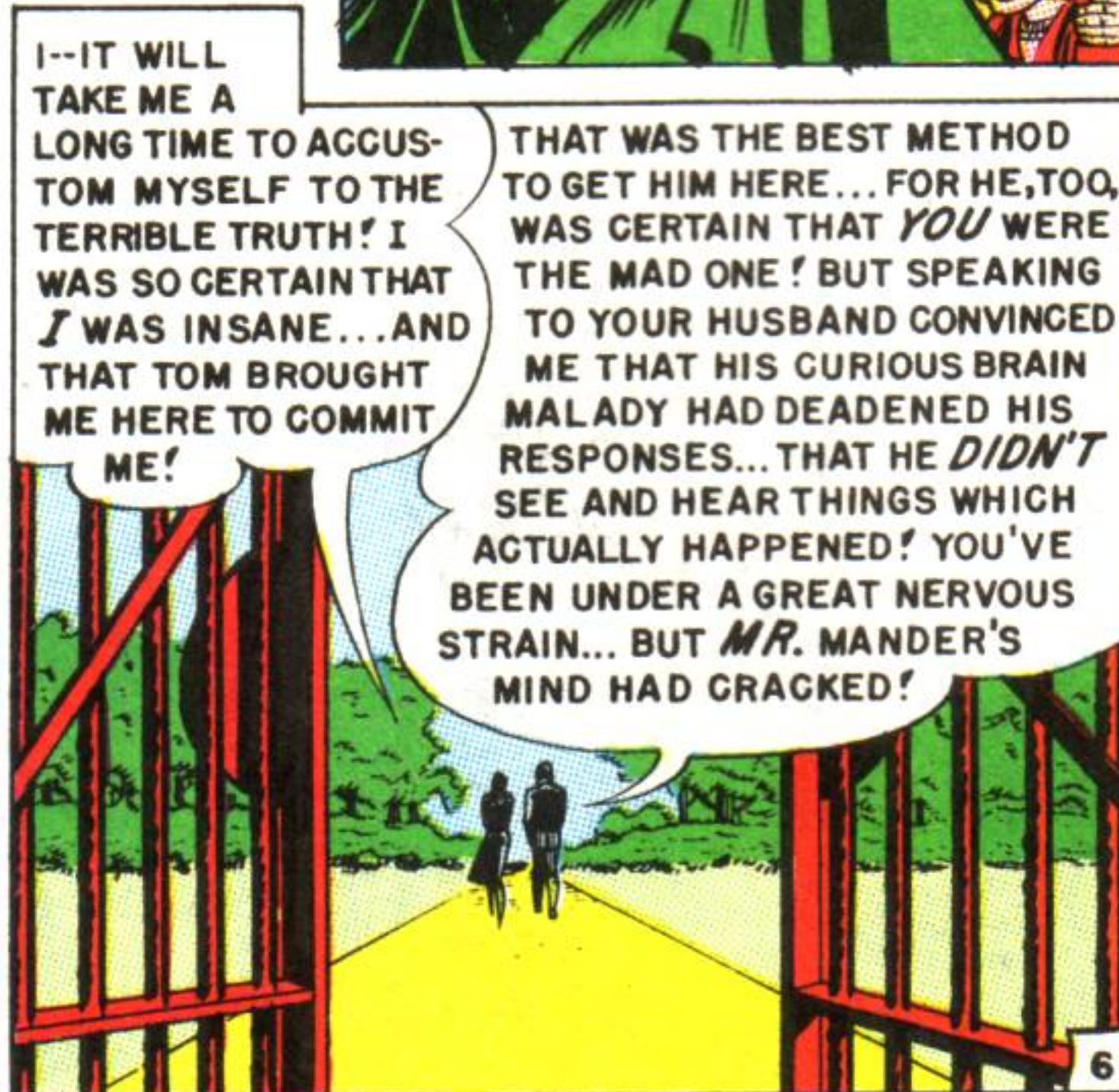
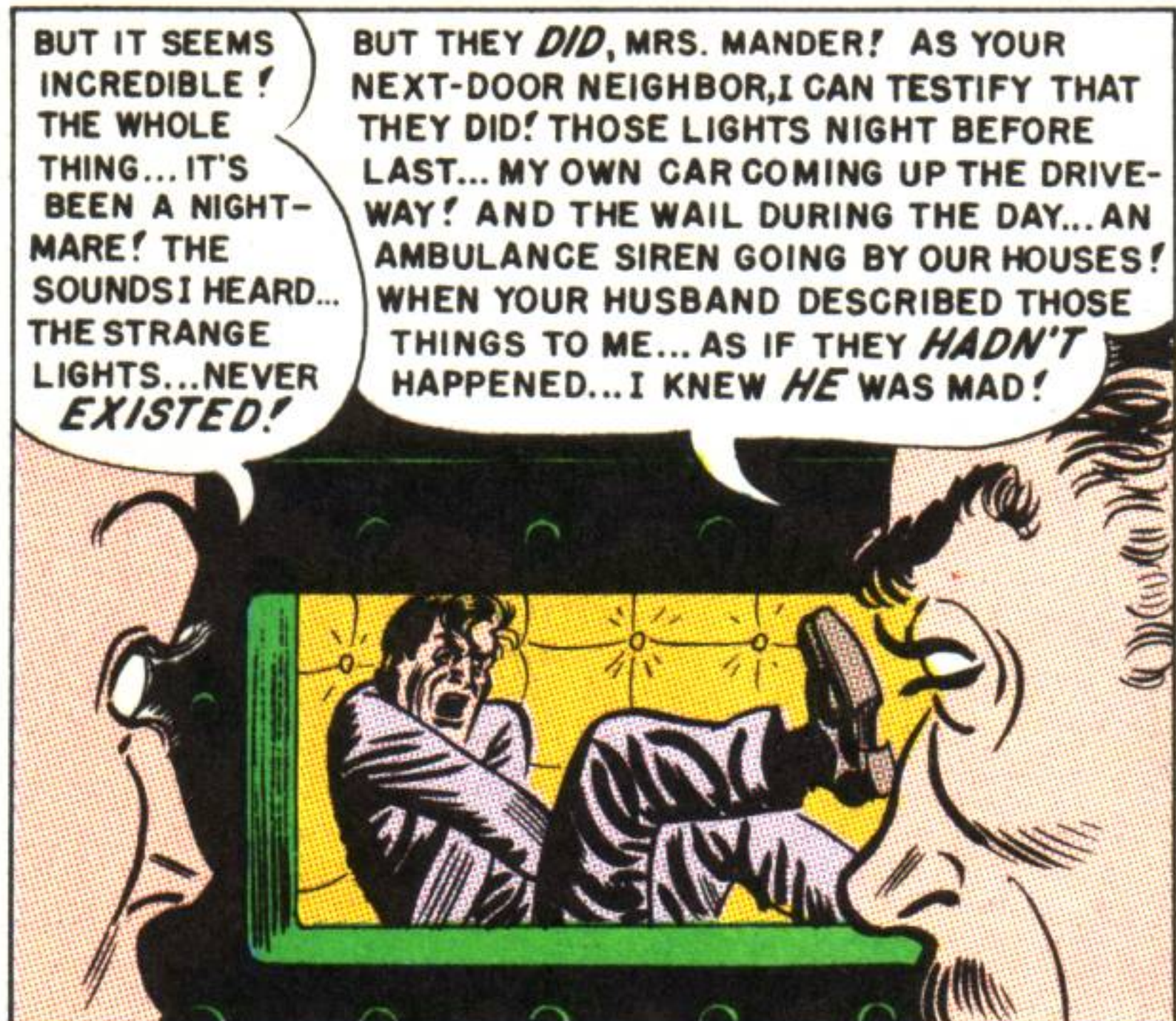
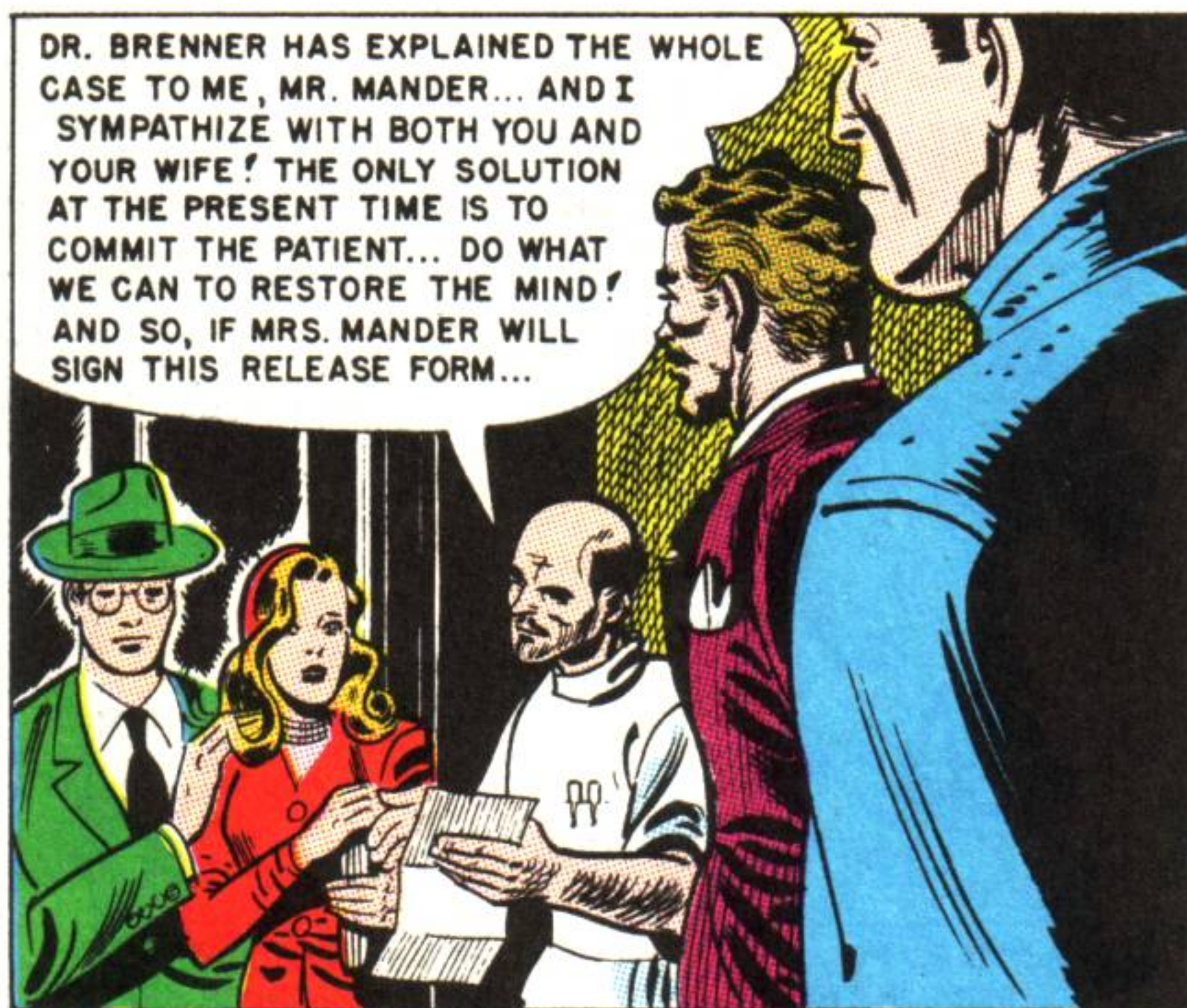


T-THERE... ON THE FLOOR! T-THAT... THAT KNIFE! HOW DID IT GET HERE, TOM... W-WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

A BUTCHER'S KNIFE... SOAKED WITH... *BLOOD!*









THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! Already I'm up to the second issue of my morbid mag! It seems like only 42 years ago I released this the first time (as "#18" of THE CRYPT OF TERROR, see the original logo below).



Dear CK,

This is in defense of 11-year-old Alicyn Novit, who wrote that her friends like to read "Ghost Ship" in "Tales From the Crypt" Vol. 2. You said it was Vol. 1.

"Ghost Ship" is indeed in Vol. 2, of the Random House series of novelizations of "Tales From the Crypt" stories. I bet that's what Alicyn's library has; it's a series of children's books newly illustrated by Jack Davis, along with panels from the originals.

You've got your "Crypts" crossed.

Guy MacMillin
Chesterfield, NH

Egad! That great Guy is right! That'll teach me to stay out of circulation for 4 decades! Alicyn, whose letter ran in NEW CRYPT #1, was little doubt right, and I offer her my sincere apologies! Random House is up to Volume 5 (ISBN 0-679-83074-X) of their series, which features new Ghoulunatic covers by Davis. Also new, "Jokes from the Crypt" (ISBN 0-679-83168-1) which features me (and two other jokers) as a stand-up comic. —CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I would like to start off by saying that I am EC's number-one fan!!! Robert Borruso, who claimed he was in NEW CRYPT #1 doesn't even know the proper abbreviation for "Tales From the Crypt" which is "Crypt" (he said

"Tales"). If Robert isn't #1, what makes me #1? Well, I've made a list:

1. I study the art of EC and can pick out what was drawn by whom.
2. I know the history of EC comics.

There are many other reasons which have slipped my mind at the moment. Love is what you need to be a fan. You must love Ghastly's detailed painted style of art. You must love Davis's small arches which he often used to fade out from shadows and the wrinkled-pants technique. You must love Craig's extra sideburn and flipping hair along with his quality corpse drawings (Davis also has the corpse quality). You must love Marie Severin's coloring skills. She knew the right color schemes for each artist and used excellent contrast in shades. She always equipped Ghastly with faded shades of blue, orange and deep reds.

EC comics have inspired me to be a writer. It also has inspired my friend Dan Kraut (another super mega-big huge EC fan) to be a writer.

Now you have brought his dream back to a new generation of readers who, like me, have been inspired to be perhaps another Ghastly (my favorite EC artist) or another Davis or Craig. Thank you!

CRYPT's True #1 Fan,
Philip M. Smith
Philadelphia, PA

Is there anyone who'd like to be CRYPT's #1 False Fan? —CK

Dear Mr. Cochran,

My name is Shawn Chancey, and I am a big CRYPT and VAULT fan. I would like more information on the hardback books you sell. Please send it to me.

Thank you!

From a CRYPT lover and a Real Horror Fan!

Shawn Chancey

Please note Shawn is not claiming to be the True #1 Real Horror Fan! And thank goodness! —CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I've just started to read your comics and they are great! I have a question. Where did the Vault Keeper and the Old Witch come from? Keep up the good work.

Tahara Eastman
Tulsa, OK

V-K and OW came from—under a rock! And they can crawl right back! No, seriously (seriously?), OW came from the Old Country (watch for HAUNT #14, or get RCP HAUNT #1, see our ad in this comic). The Vault-Keeper came from nowhere and his stories from the same place.
—CK



Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I thoroughly enjoyed [RCP CRYPT 6]. Excellent artwork. I buy your magazine not only for the quality reading material, but for the fantastic illustrations. This is definitely one of the spookiest, superbly well-written, talentedly artistic comic books I've ever read and looked at, one of the best comics around. It's—Great! What a mag!

A sincere CRYPT
artist/reader fan,
Melanie Miller
Lawrenceville, IL

You may not be the #1 artist/reader fan, but you're sincere.
—CK

Dear CK,

I just finished [RCP CRYPT 6]. Terror-ific! Why, I even loved the CRIME SUSPENSTORIES at the back of the book!

In Comic Buyers Guide No. 441 (I think) while introducing [RCP CRYPT #4], your teeth were vampire's! Please spill it, are you a vampire?

But back to Tales, I was going to say the Vault-Keepers stories are like him, DEAD. They make me snore.

Laramie, why must you irritate the GhouLunatics so? Please give a little time in between your letters.

Well, I've taken enough of your time and the sun's coming up, so I'll dig you later!

Eric Henderson
Burnsville, MN

I'll ask for a DIG-UP call for midnight, that's my time to HOWL! Erik, the CRIME material is good stuff, and you can get it in our reprints of CRIME appearing as a separate title every quarter!

No, I'm not a vampire, nor do I play one on TV. But after decades of waiting around to get back into comics, I got a little long in the tooth! That's the fangs I get!

VK's a dead one, alright, altho I never held that against anyone. It's only right to read them the same way he writes them, asleep! I wonder if Laramie Carlson isn't a victim of Vaultosis Narcosis; it's been weeks since he's written.
—CK

Dear Russ,

Thank you for reprinting those great EC horror comics from the early 50s. At the age of 35, I always felt that I had missed out on something truly classic. Although I have several of your other classic reprints, these new reprints, in the original 32 page format, are "The Real Thing". I'm very pleased with the superior quality, and have enclosed a subscription order for CRYPT, VAULT, and HAUNT.

Mailing the comics in strong envelopes is a good idea. Most apartment mailboxes are small, with a common magazine rack. The envelopes should prevent dog-eared copies.

Once again, thank you, and keep up the good work.

Bruce C. Beighley
Waltham, MA

Okay, we WILL keep the good work, to wit:

The second issues of **NEW WEIRD SCIENCE**, and **SHOCK** are now in release, and you can still get the first issues of **NEW VAULT**, **WEIRD FANTASY**, **TWO-FISTED TALES**, **HAUNT**, **WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY** and **CRIME**! Ask your comic book shop to stock them, or write to us for back issues! Better yet, **SUBSCRIBE** (see our ad in this comic)!

We want letters! Write to:

**CRYPT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775**

**THIS COMIC REPRINTS:
CRYPT OF TERROR "#18" (#2, 1950)**

"The Maestro's Hand!"
"The Living Corpse"
"Madness at Manderville"
"Mute Witness to Murder!"

Al Feldstein
Wally Wood
Harvey Kurtzman
Johnny Craig

Women are known as the talkative sex, but I never fully realized the power of the *unspoken* word until I became a...

MUTE WITNESS to MURDER!



ANOTHER SUSPENSE STORY
from THE CRYPT OF
TERROR!

IT WAS THE EVENING OF OUR SECOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY AND STEVE AND I HAD JUST RETURNED TO OUR APARTMENT AFTER A GLORIOUS ROUND OF THE MANY NIGHT SPOTS! IT WAS ALMOST 3 A.M.... BUT I WASN'T THE LEAST BIT TIRED...

OH, STEVE... IT'S BEEN A WONDERFUL ANNIVERSARY!

I'M GLAD YOU'RE HAPPY, PAM... BUT DON'T FORGET I HAVE TO WORK TOMORROW! WHAT SAY WE GO TO BED?

OH, NOT YET, STEVE... I'M TOO HAPPY AND EXCITED TO SLEEP! YOU GO... I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MOMENT!

OH... OKAY! BUT DON'T BE TOO LONG, PAM!



STEVE WENT INTO OUR BEDROOM. I MOVED TO THE WINDOW AND STOOD LOOKING OUT... AT THE STARS AND SKY, AT A LIGHTED WINDOW ACROSS THE COURT... AND I WONDERED IF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE WERE AS HAPPY AS I...



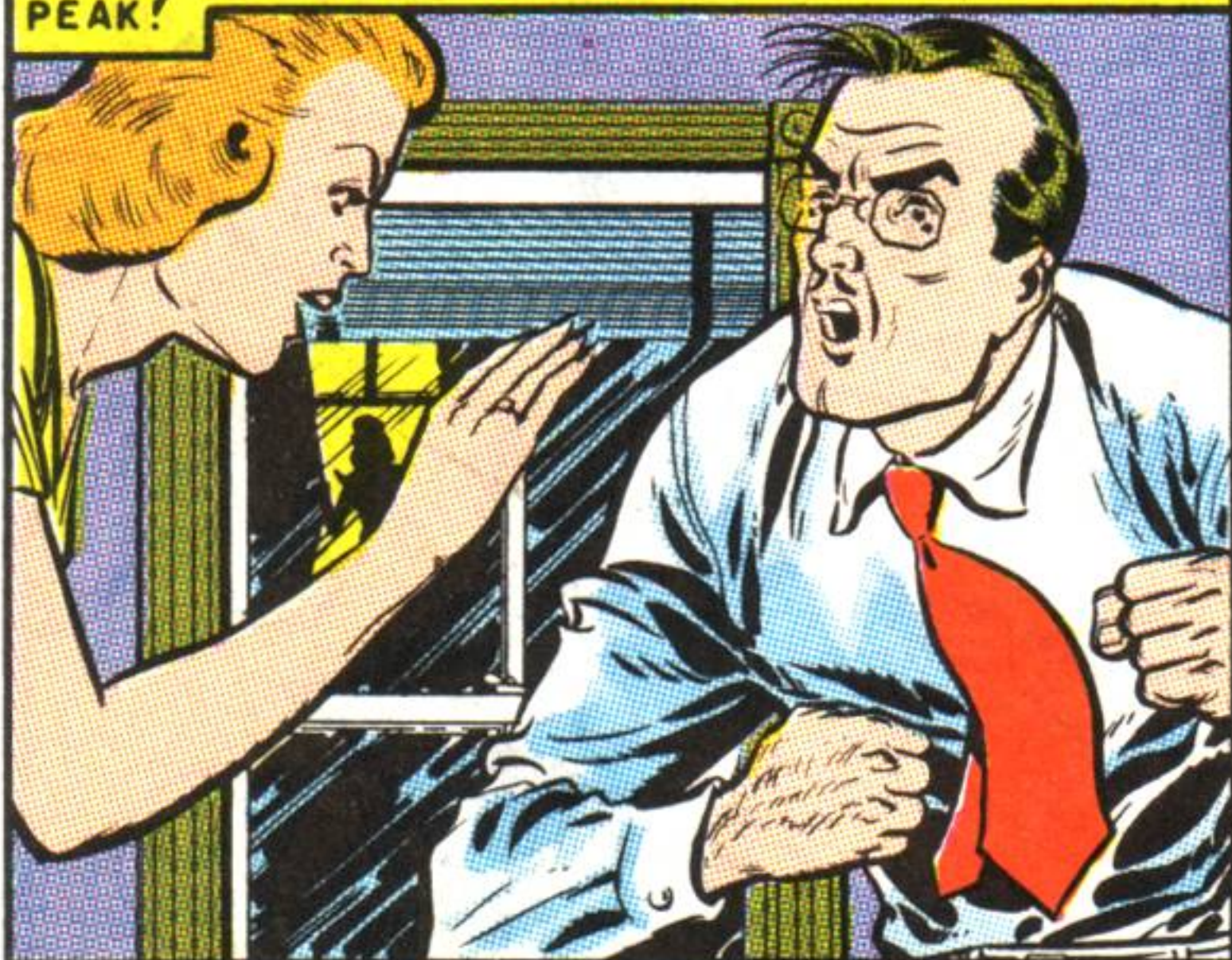
I WATCHED AS A MAN AND WOMAN MOVED BACK AND FORTH IN FRONT OF THEIR WINDOW. THEY WERE ARGUING...



MY FEELING OF HAPPINESS FLED... AND IN ITS PLACE THERE GREW A FEELING OF DREAD... A PREMONITION! SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN... I KNEW IT... AND I WAS AFRAID!



I WATCHED SPELLBOUND! THE MAN WAS GESTURING WILDLY, AND THOUGH I COULDN'T HEAR HIS WORDS, I KNEW THEIR ARGUMENT HAD REACHED A DANGEROUS PEAK!



SUDDENLY THERE WAS SOMETHING IN HIS HAND... HE RAISED HIS ARM AND STRUCK HIS WIFE A HEAVY BLOW! SHE CRUMPLED TO THE FLOOR... AND I KNEW SHE WAS DEAD! BEFORE MY EYES, THIS MAN HAD MURDERED HIS WIFE!



I WAS PARALYZED! I WANTED TO YELL... TO SCREAM FOR HELP! I WANTED TO RUN TO STEVE AND TELL HIM ABOUT THIS HORRIBLE THING I HAD SEEN! I WANTED TO MOVE... BUT I COULDN'T!



SUDDENLY THE SPELL BROKE! I WHIRLED... STEVE WAS WATCHING ME FROM THE BEDROOM DOORWAY... WITH A PUZZLED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, PAM? YOU'RE WHITE AS A SHEET! ANYTHING WRONG?



I OPENED MY MOUTH TO BLURT OUT TO STEVE WHAT I HAD SEEN! I OPENED MY MOUTH TO SPEAK... BUT NOTHING HAPPENED! MY LIPS MOVED... BUT NO SOUND CAME OUT! I COULDN'T TALK! I HAD BEEN STRUCK DUMB!

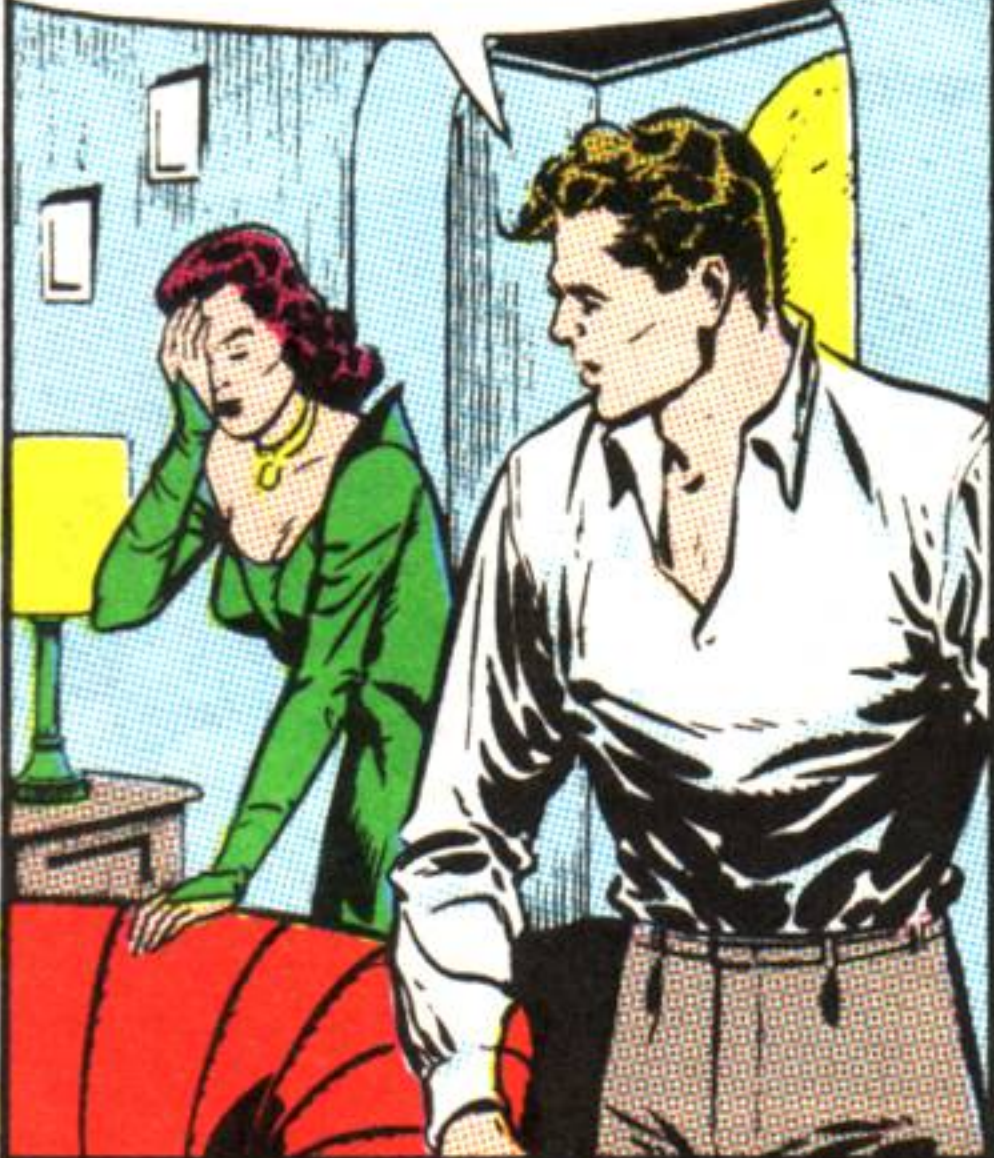


I COULDN'T SPEAK! I TRIED, BUT IT WAS NO USE! THE SHOCK OF SEEING A MURDER COMMITTED HAD CAUSED ME TO LOSE MY VOICE!

PAM, FOR HEAVENS SAKE, TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG! *TELL ME!*

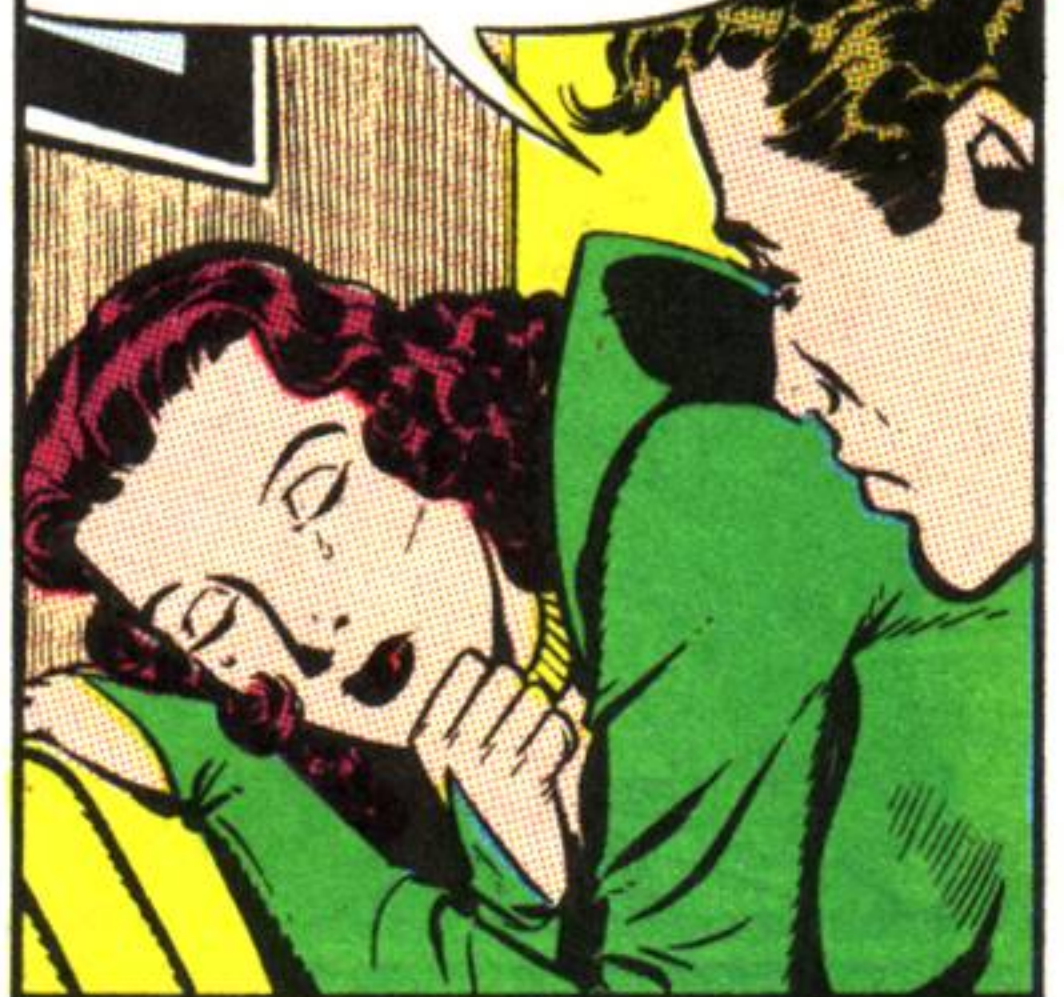


SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH YOU, PAM! YOU STAY QUIET... I'LL BE RIGHT BACK! I WANT TO GET A DOCTOR! YOU'RE SHAKING LIKE A LEAF!



STEVE RETURNED A FEW MOMENTS LATER TO FIND ME SLUMPED ON THE COUCH! I WAS STILL TREMBLING...

PAM...PAM, DARLING! I'VE BROUGHT DR. BASK TO EXAMINE YOU... HE LIVES HERE IN OUR BUILDING...

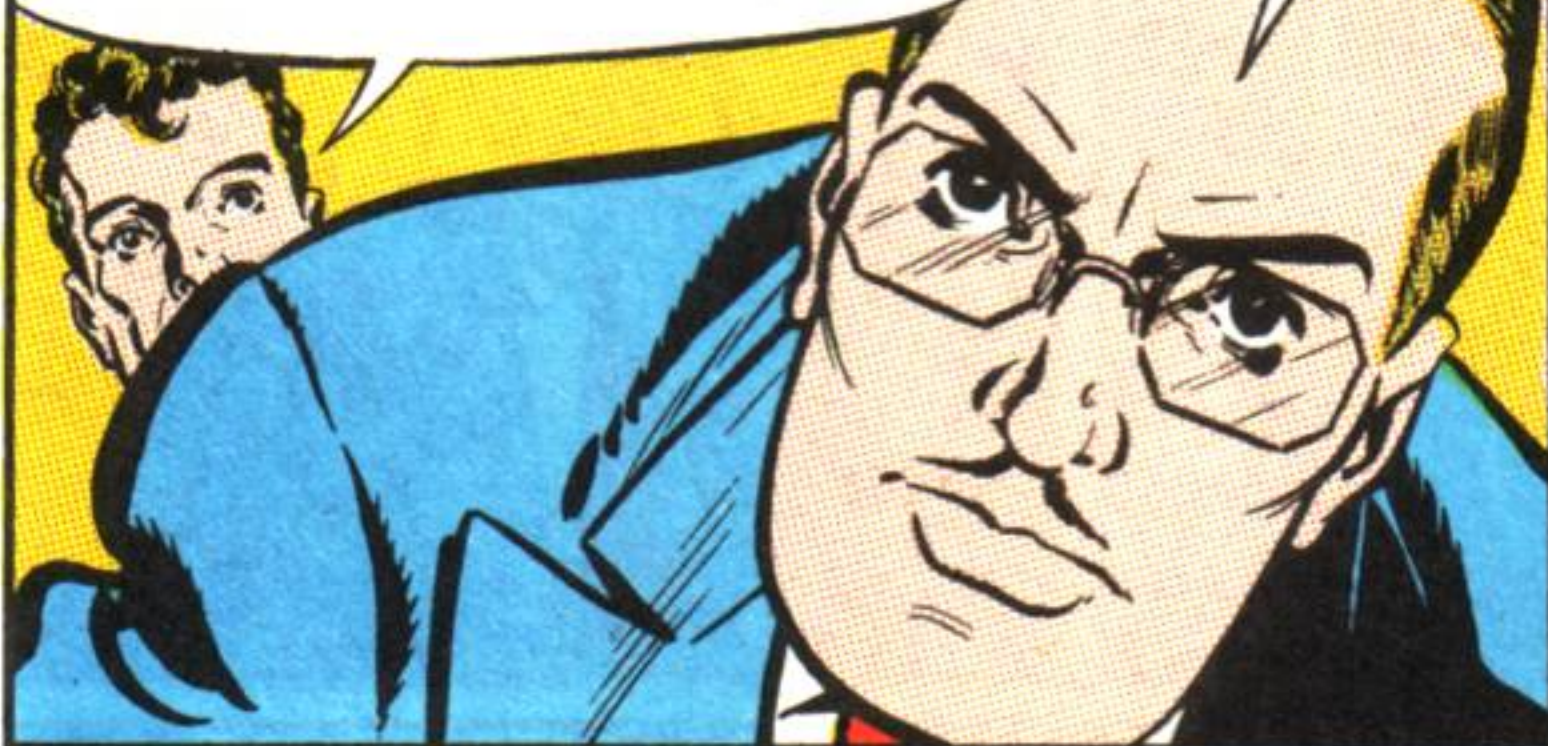


I SLOWLY TURNED TO FACE DR. BASK... FOR A MOMENT HIS FACE BLURRED... BUT IT SUDDENLY CAME INTO SHARP FOCUS! MY HEART KNOTTED AND BLOOD HAMMERED IN MY HEAD... FOR I FOUND MYSELF STARING INTO THE EYES OF THE MAN WHO HAD JUST KILLED HIS WIFE!

DR. BASK WENT TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKED OUT. WHEN HE TURNED TO US AGAIN I SAW IN HIS EYES THAT HE *KNEW* WHAT I HAD SEEN...

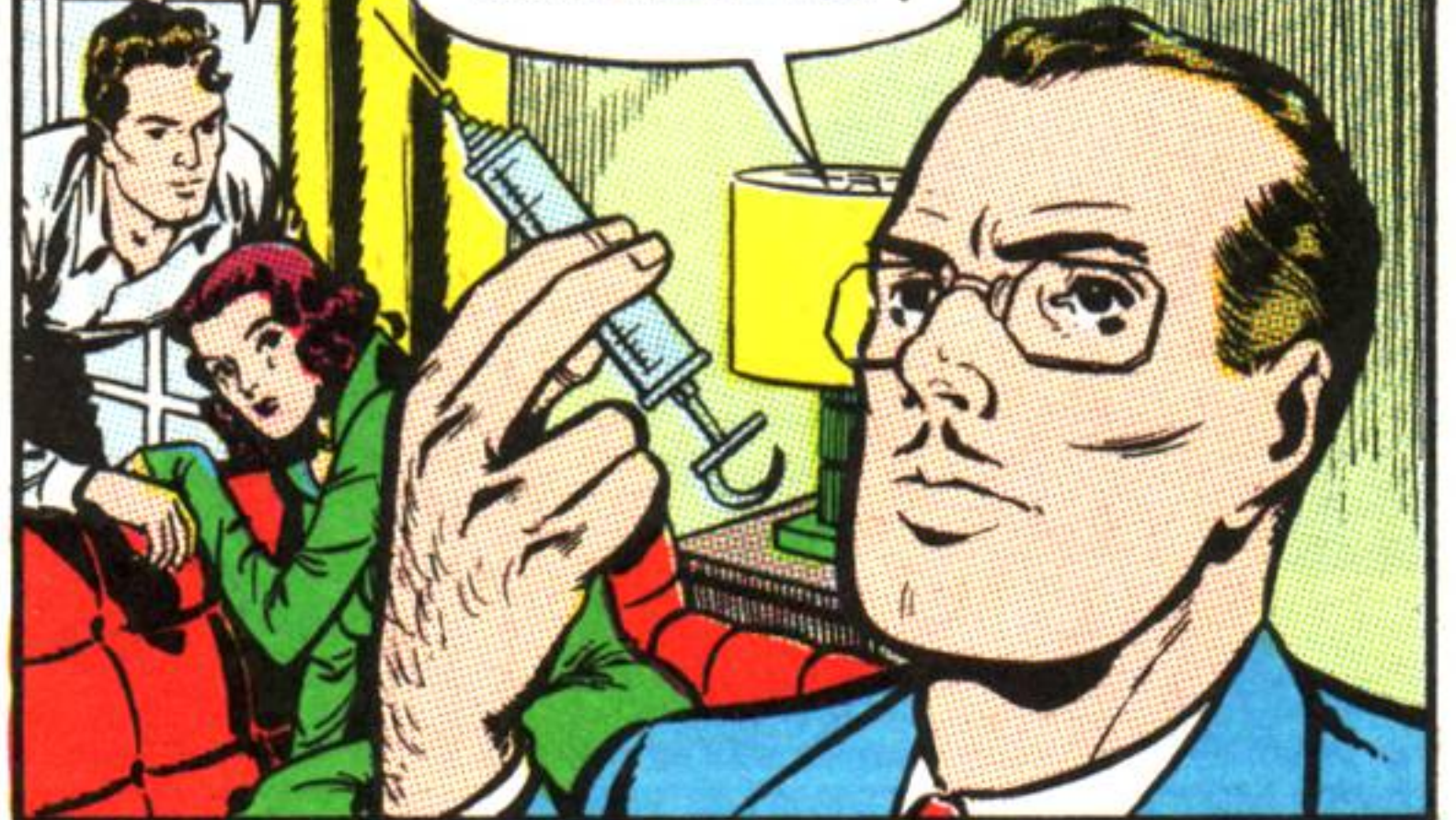
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S THE MATTER, DOCTOR! SHE WAS LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW AND SUDDENLY BECAME THIS WAY... LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF *SHOCK!* SHE CAN'T EVEN TALK!

LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW? HMMM...



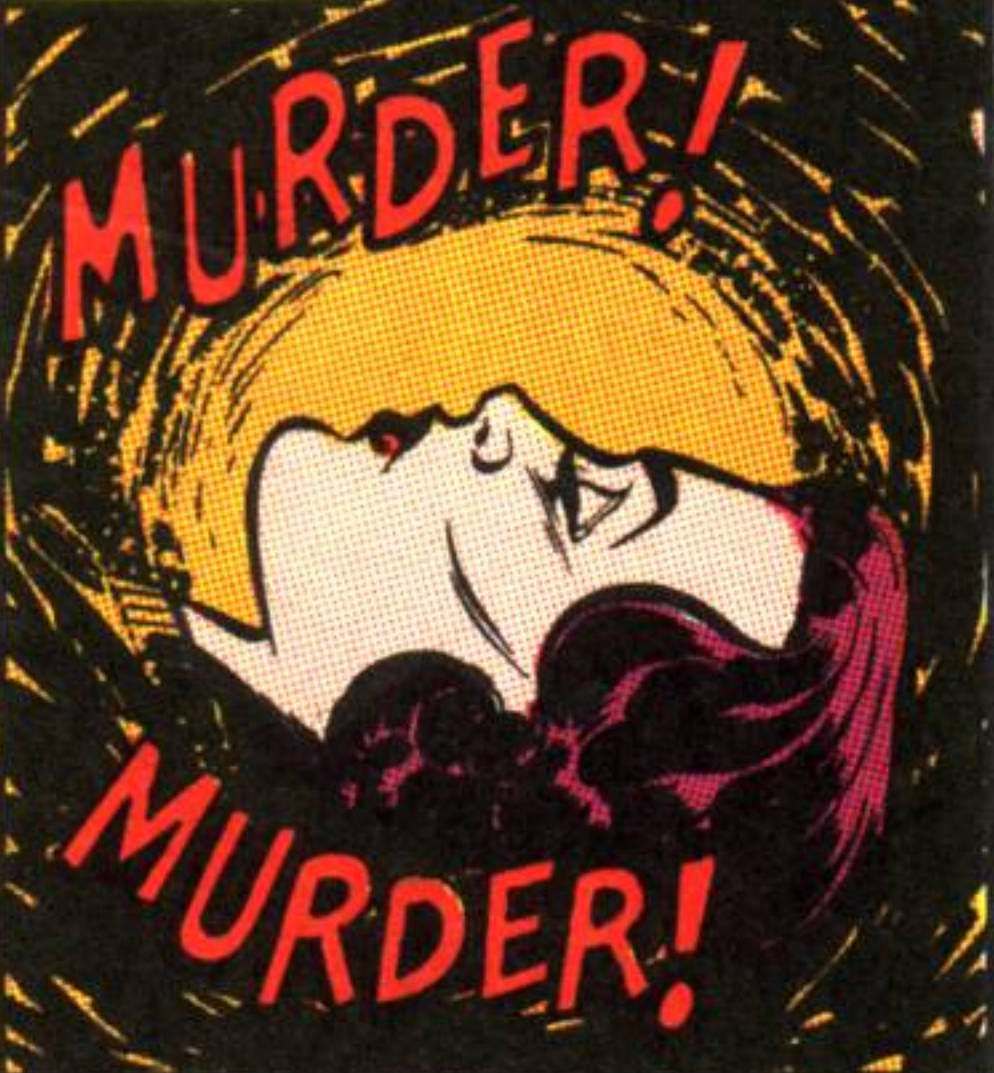
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER, DR. BASK?

ER... *SHOCK!* POSSIBLY TOO MUCH OF A STRAIN ON HER NERVES IN SOME WAY!...COULD HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY *ANY-THING!* I'LL GIVE HER A SEDATIVE NOW... MAKE HER SLEEP!



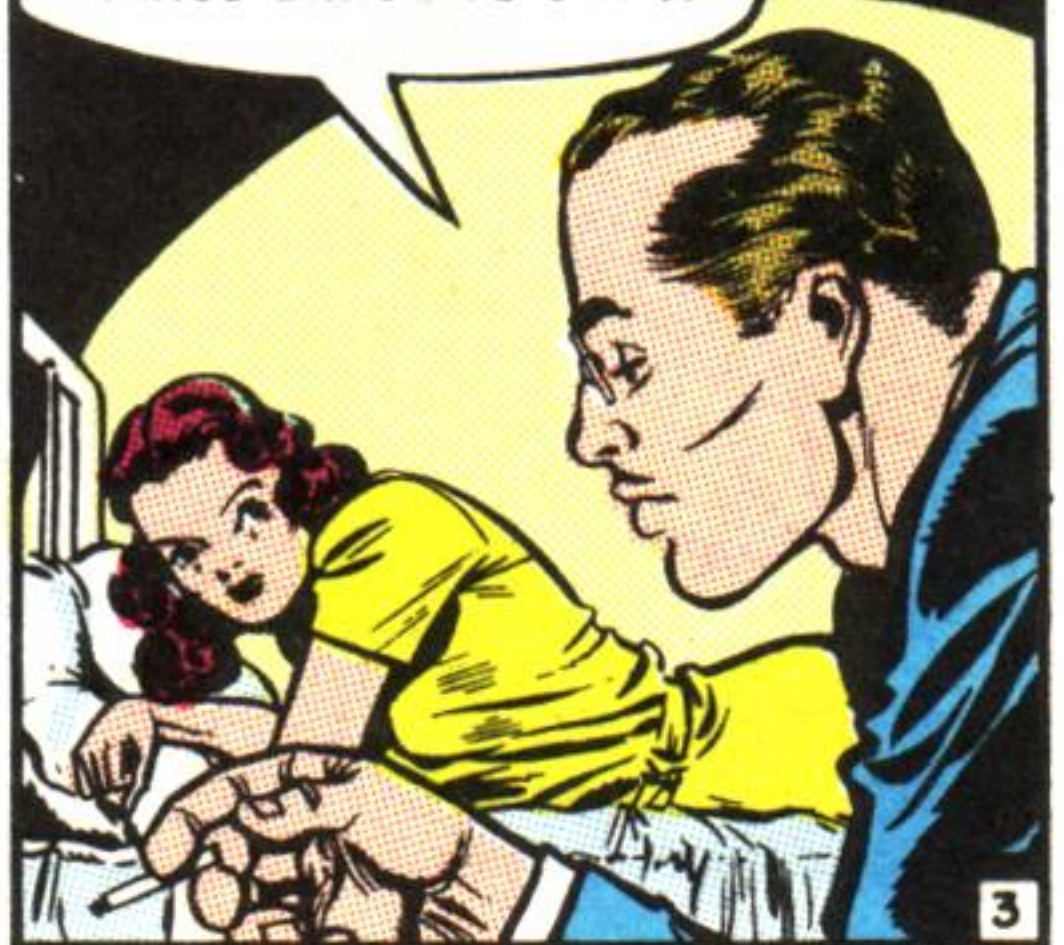
I TRIED TO FIGHT AGAINST BEING GIVEN A SEDATIVE, BUT WITH STEVE HOLDING ME, THINKING IT FOR MY OWN GOOD, IT WAS USELESS...

I FELT DROWSY IN A MATTER OF MINUTES...DURING WHICH TIME THE DOCTOR CONCLUDED HIS EXAMINATION. A MOMENT LATER I WAS ASLEEP...



I SLEPT LONG AND I AWOKE WITH A START..TO FIND DR. BASK BENDING OVER ME! I WAS NOT IN MY HOME...

AH, YOU'RE AWAKE, MY DEAR! NOW LIE QUIETLY AND THERE WON'T BE ANY TROUBLE! THERE ARE SOME THINGS I WISH TO SAY...



I **KNOW** YOU SAW ME MURDER MY WIFE... AND YOU'RE THE **ONLY PERSON WHO KNOWS!** AS LONG AS YOU CAN'T CONTACT ANYONE, I'M SAFE! THAT IS WHY I'VE BROUGHT YOU HERE TO MY SANITARIUM! I TOLD YOUR HUSBAND AND EVERYONE HERE THAT YOU ARE A VIOLENT MENTAL CASE AND ARE TO BE KEPT HERE IN CONFINEMENT... UNTIL I CAN "CURE" YOU!



YOU WILL BE QUITE SAFE... NO ONE WILL HARM YOU! YOU WON'T BE DISTURBED EXCEPT FOR THE ATTENDANT WHO COMES TO FEED YOU! YOU SEE, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO FEED **YOURSELF** BECAUSE I'M GOING TO TIE YOU UP IN THIS STRAIGHT-JACKET! I DON'T WANT YOUR HANDS FREE TO WRITE NOTES TO THE ATTENDANT!



OF COURSE, THE ATTENDANT WOULDN'T BELIEVE YOU ANYWAY BECAUSE YOU'RE "**CRAZY**," HA! HA! BUT I BELIEVE IN TAKING PRECAUTIONS! **HEY! STOP THAT!**



CAN'T LET HIM PUT ME IN A STRAIGHT-JACKET! I'VE GOT TO GET **OUT** OF HERE!

I STRUGGLED FURIOUSLY BUT DR. BASK OVERPOWERED ME! IN A FEW MOMENTS I FOUND MYSELF TRUSSED, HELPLESS, ON THE BED...

YOU SHOULDN'T... HAVE DONE THAT... MY HEART... CAN'T TAKE MUCH... PHYSICAL EXERTION! MY MEDICINE! MUST TAKE MY... MEDICINE...



AH! I FEEL ALL RIGHT NOW! MY DEAR, EVEN IF YOU **HAD** OVERPOWERED ME, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LEAVE THIS ROOM... BECAUSE THE DOOR CAN ONLY BE OPENED OR CLOSED BY A GUARD IN THE CONTROL OFFICE PUSHING A BUTTON! EVERYTHING IS AUTOMATIC...



...AND THE GUARD ONLY OPENS OR CLOSES THE DOOR IN RESPONSE TO MY VOICE WHEN I SPEAK THROUGH THIS TRANSMITTER HERE BY THE DOOR! THERE IS A SIMILAR ONE OUTSIDE!



IT'S HOPELESS! I'LL NEVER GET OUT OF HERE NOW! OH, STEVE, IF ONLY YOU KNEW! IF ONLY YOU COULD HELP ME!

HEANIGSON?... THIS IS DR. BASK IN ROOM 3 CB... OPEN THE DOOR, WILL YOU PLEASE...



YES, SIR!

GOODBYE, PAMELA...



SOB!
SOB!

I CRIED MYSELF TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT...

STEVE SOB! STEVE...
WHY WON'T YOU HELP ME?
SOB! IF ONLY I COULD
SPEAK...TELL SOMEONE!
BUT I CAN'T! IT'S
HOPELESS...HOPELESS!



THE FEMALE ATTENDANT TENDED AND FED ME REGULARLY. WHEN I TRIED TO SPEAK, SHE WOULD PAT ME ON THE SHOULDER AND SMILE...BUT JUST TO HUMOR ME! SHE THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY TOO!

SURE, KID,
SURE...TOUGH,
AIN'T IT? WHY
DON'T YOU
TAKE A NAP
NOW?



...AND THEN SHE'D LEAVE...AND I'D BE ALONE AGAIN.

HEANIGSON?...THIS IS NURSE BROWN. OPEN UP, WILL YOU?

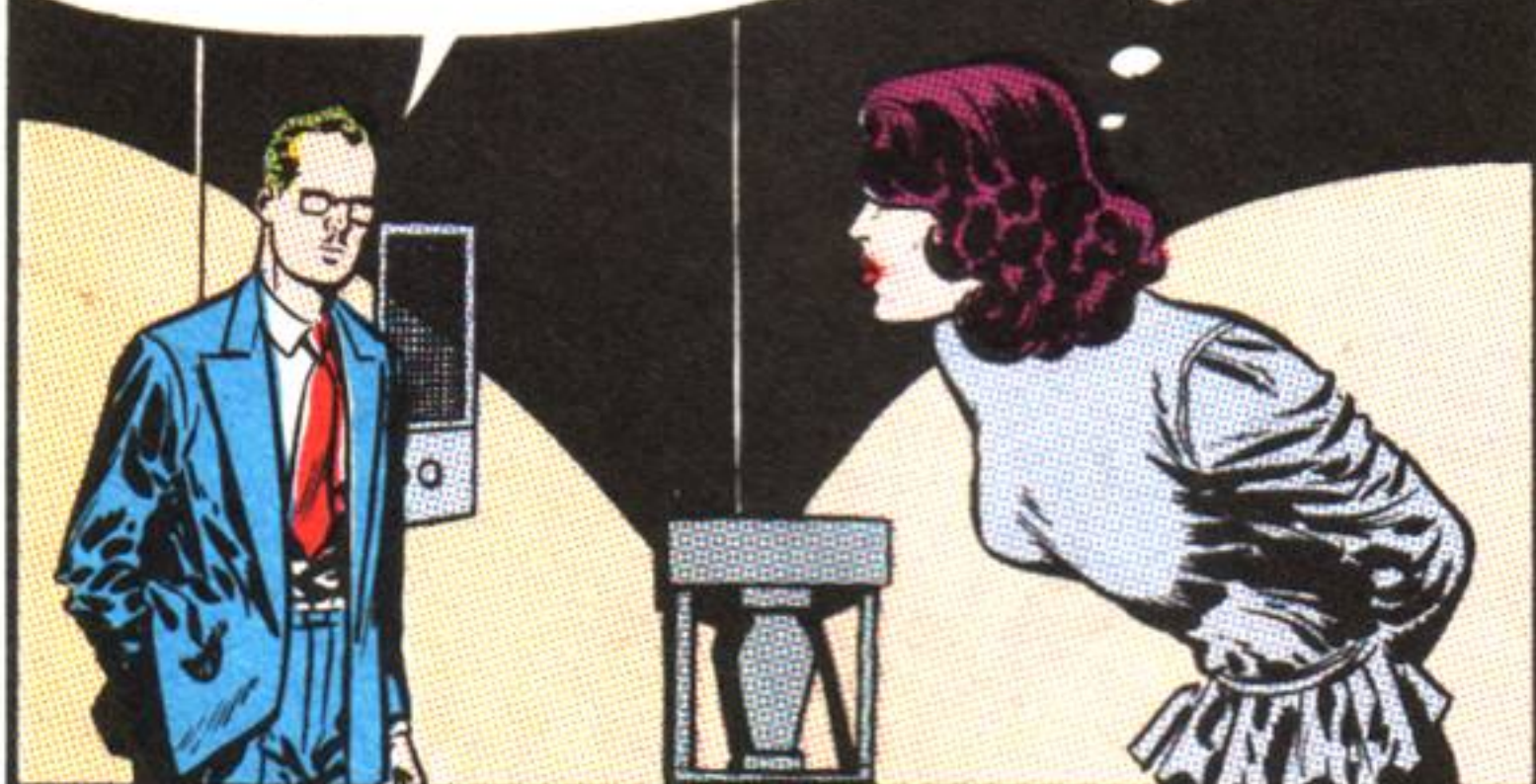
OKAY, BROWN...



DAYS PASSED MONOTONOUSLY. MY NERVES WERE ON EDGE AND I SOMETIMES CRIED SO HYSTERICALLY THAT I THOUGHT I MIGHT REALLY BE INSANE! AFTER MANY DAYS, I RECEIVED A VISIT FROM DR. BASK...

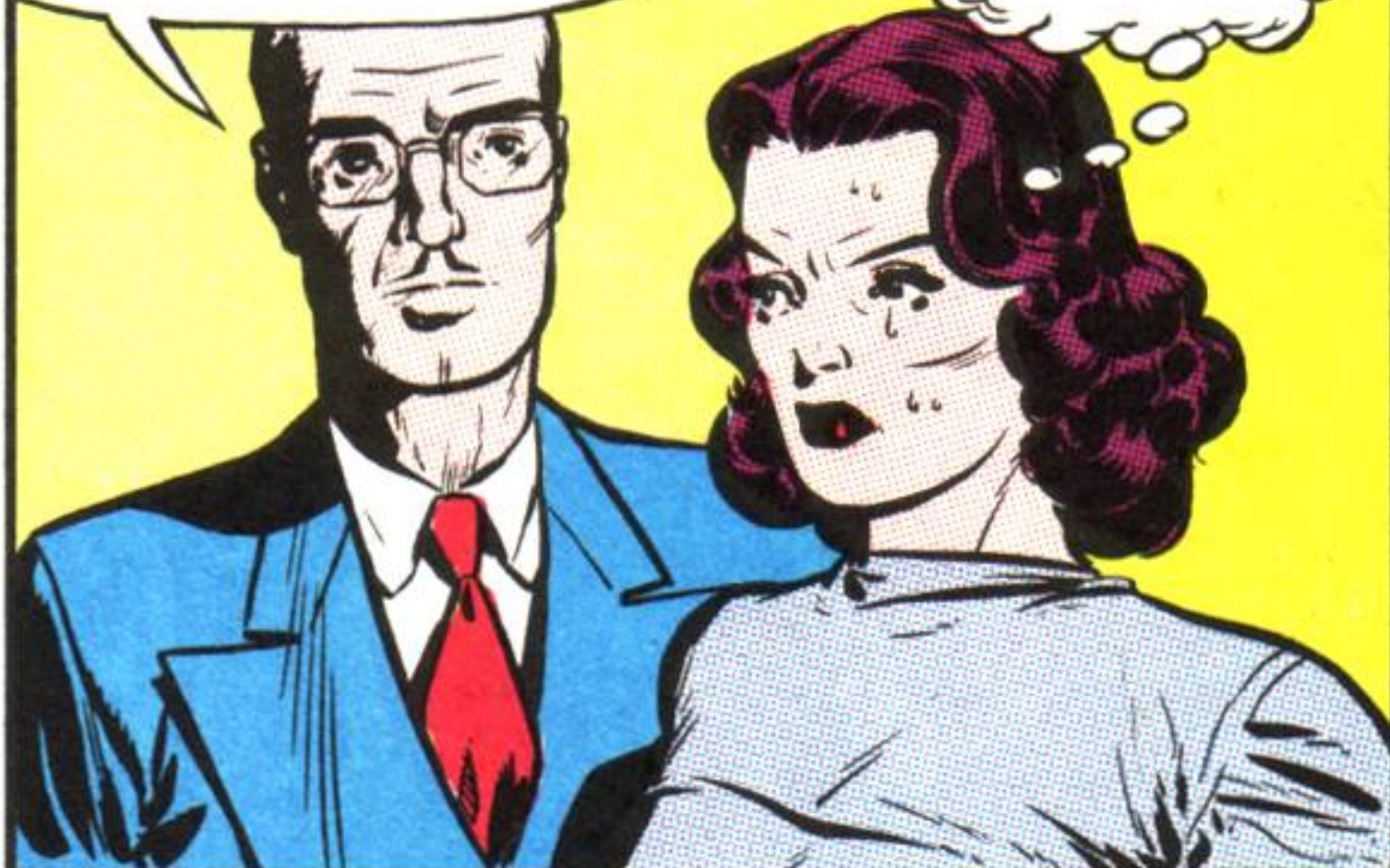
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN, MY DEAR? SORRY I HAVEN'T DROPPED IN TO SEE YOU, BUT I'VE BEEN QUITE BUSY! I CAME TODAY TO TELL YOU SOME RATHER BAD NEWS!

BAD NEWS?
WHAT DOES HE
MEAN? HAS ANYTHING
HAPPENED TO
STEVE?



ANY TIME NOW THE SHOCK YOU EXPERIENCED MAY WEAR OFF AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SPEAK AGAIN! THAT WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS TO ME! SO, FOR MY OWN PROTECTION, MY DEAR... I SHALL HAVE TO KILL YOU!

KILL ME???
OH, WHAT
WILL I DO? I DON'T
WANT TO DIE! I'VE
GOT TO DO
SOMETHING!



IT'S ALL VERY SIMPLE! I'VE SCHEDULED YOU FOR A BRAIN OPERATION TOMORROW...WHICH I WILL PERFORM! ONE SLIP OF THE SCALPEL AND...

...AND I WILL HAVE RID MYSELF OF THE ONE PERSON WHO COULD SEND ME TO THE ELECTRIC CHAIR! IT WILL BE A 'REGRETTABLE ACCIDENT!' HA! HA!



DR. BASK LEFT AND I THREW MYSELF ON THE BED, CRYING IN MY DESPAIR...



I...I **SPOKE!** MY VOICE HAS COME BACK! I CAN SPEAK AGAIN! OH, THANK HEAVEN, I CAN SPEAK! THERE'S HOPE LEFT! I'LL TELL NURSE BROWN AND... **NO!**



I **CAN'T** TELL ANYONE! THEY STILL THINK I'M CRAZY! THEY'LL TELL DR. BASK MY VOICE HAS RETURNED AND... THERE MUST BE **ANOTHER WAY!**



ALL NIGHT LONG I LAY AWAKE, TRYING TO THINK OF A MEANS OF ESCAPE. BUT WHEN DR. BASK CAME THE NEXT MORNING, I STILL HAD NOT FORMULATED A PLAN...

I MUST REMEMBER **NOT TO SPEAK!** IF I SPEAK **ONCE...** I'M **DOOMED!**

WE'VE YET SOME TIME BEFORE YOUR OPERATION, MRS. WORTH, BUT I'M GOING TO RELEASE YOU FROM YOUR STRAIGHT-JACKET NOW!



AS DR. BASK LOOSEMED THE STRAPS, I REALIZED THAT THESE WOULD BE MY LAST FEW LIVING MOMENTS...FOR ONCE INSIDE THE OPERATING ROOM, I WAS LOST! NOW WAS THE TIME...HERE WAS MY CHANCE...MY **ONLY CHANCE!** I **LEAPED!**



I FOUGHT VICIOUSLY! I KNEW I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF MY CELL, BUT STILL I FOUGHT! SUDDENLY...



HE HAD A HEART ATTACK! HE FELL HEAVILY TO THE FLOOR, HIS HANDS FUMBLING IN HIS POCKETS... TRYING TO FIND HIS LIFE-SAVING MEDICINE! A STUNNED LOOK CAME INTO HIS EYES...

⤵GASP⤵ MY... MY MEDICINE! I...DON'T HAVE IT...I DON'T HAVE MY MEDICINE! ⤵GASP⤵ I'LL... I'LL DIE!



A FLOOD OF THOUGHTS RAN THROUGH MY MIND AS HE LAY THERE, GASPING! WITH DR. BASK DEAD, I'D BE ABLE TO TELL ANOTHER DOCTOR WHAT HAPPENED...THEY'D EXAMINE ME AND FIND THAT I WAS *NOT* INSANE!

PAMELA...CALL HEANIGSON...TELL HIM...MY MEDICINE...MY...OH...I FORGOT...YOU...YOU CAN'T SPEAK!

BUT... BUT I *CAN* SPEAK...



PLEASE...I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU! I'LL SET YOU FREE!...TURN MYSELF OVER TO THE POLICE...I...I PROMISE! JUST...JUST CALL HEANIGSON! GASP!

I...I'M SORRY, DR. BASK...



WHAT!? THEN...CALL HEANIGSON...JUST PUSH THE LITTLE BUTTON...TELL HIM...MY...MY MEDICINE! HURRY...PLEASE HURRY...

I'M... I'M SORRY, DR. BASK... BUT TO SAVE *MY* LIFE I MUST LET *YOU* DIE! IT'S... IT'S THE ONLY WAY...



BUT...YOU *CAN'T* JUST LET... ME *DIE*! SAVE ME...PLEASE! MY MEDICINE...TELL HEANIGSON...PLEASE...PLEASE...PLEASE!

NO...



PLEASE...

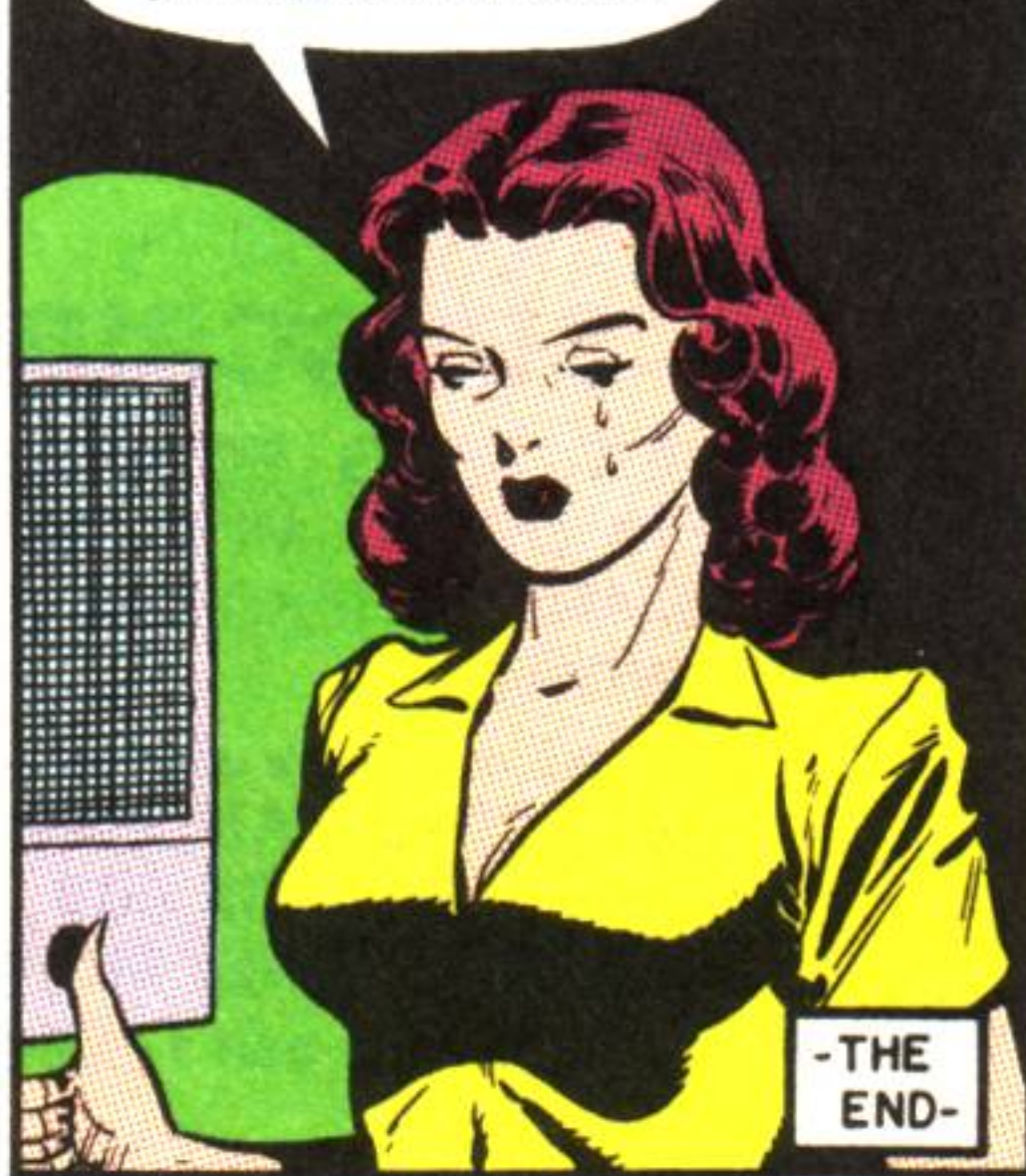
NO...



I TURNED TO THE WALL AND COVERED MY EARS TO KEEP FROM HEARING HIM PLEAD FOR HIS LIFE...AND WHEN I TURNED BACK AGAIN, HE WAS STILL...



HEANIGSON?...THIS IS THE PATIENT IN ROOM 3CB. SEND SOMEONE IN HERE RIGHT AWAY...DR. BASK HAS JUST DIED OF A HEART ATTACK!



-THE END-



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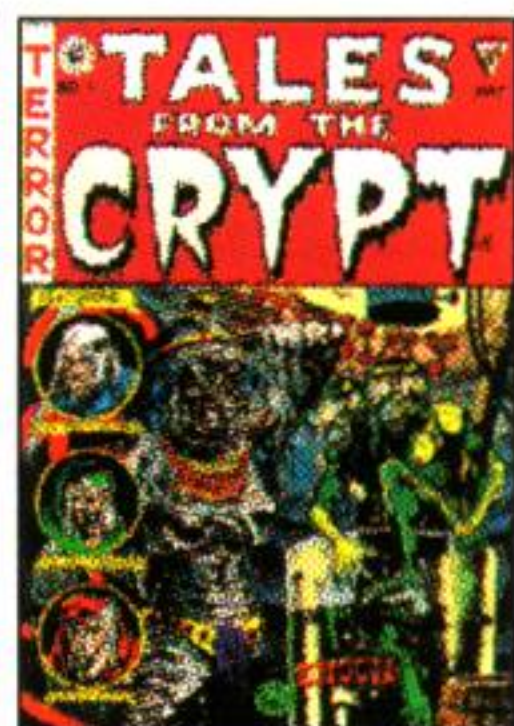
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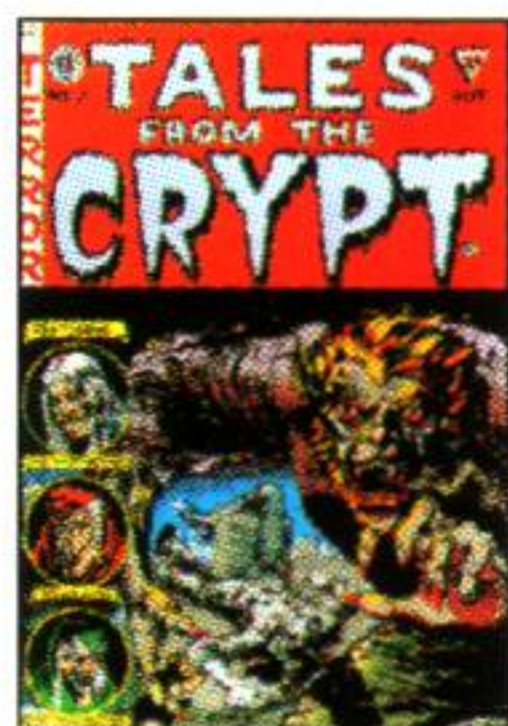
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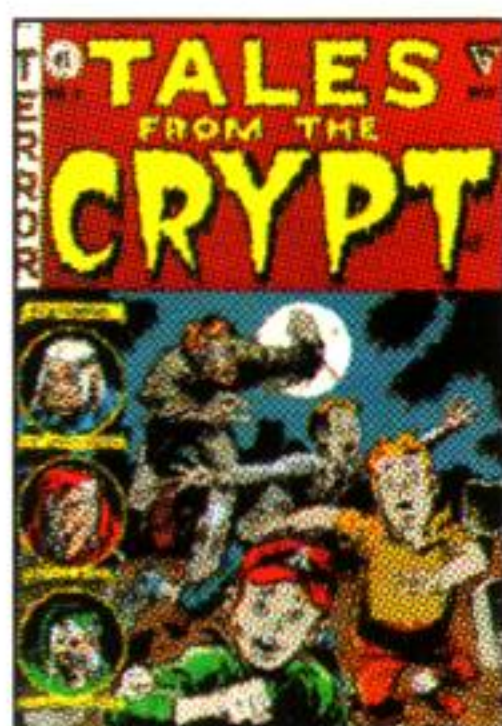
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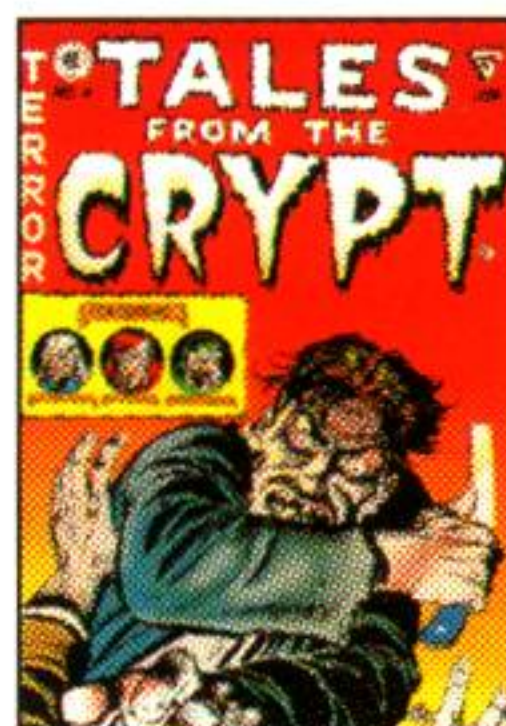
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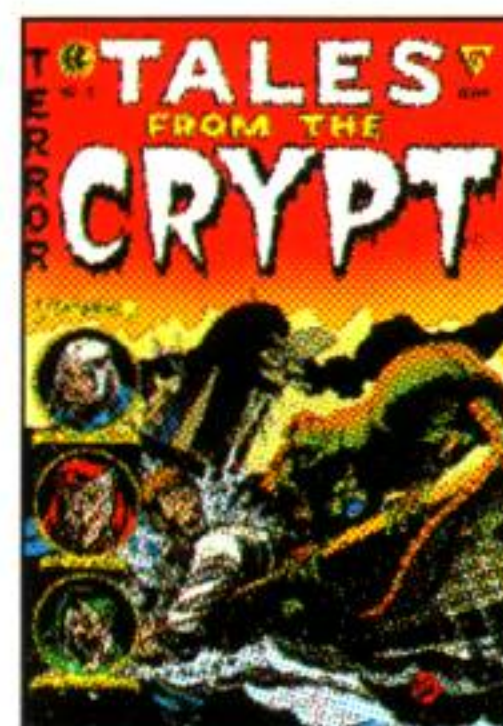
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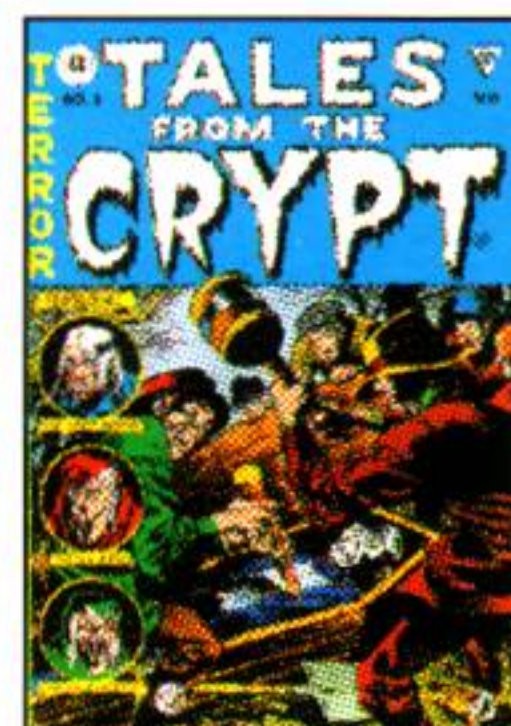
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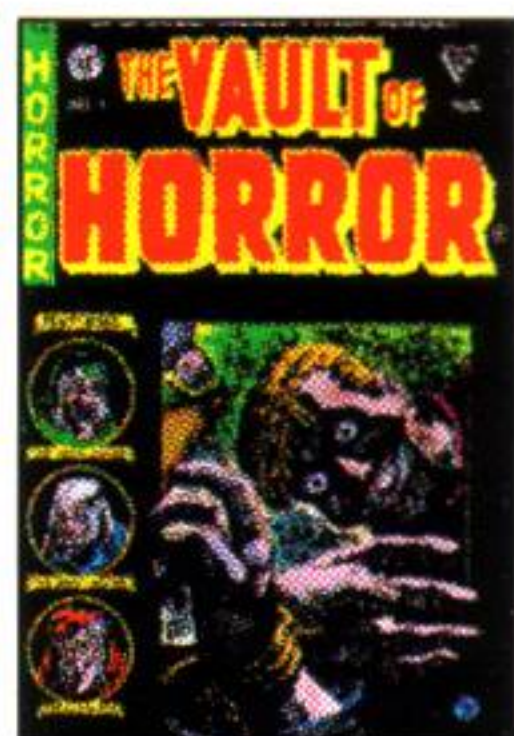
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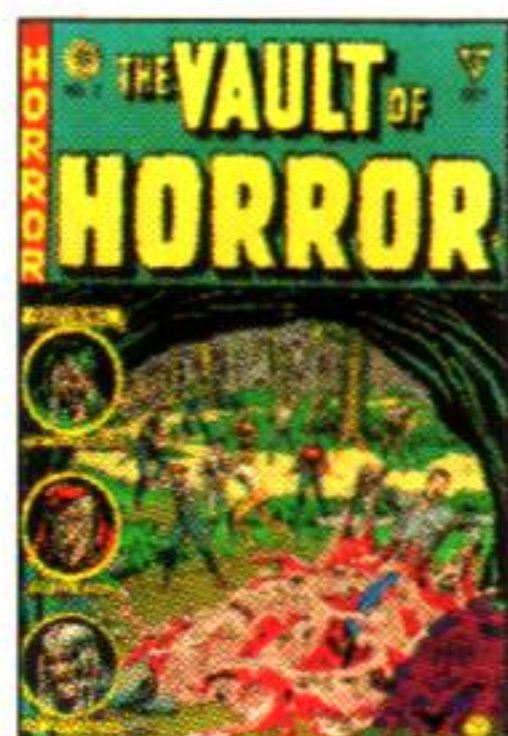
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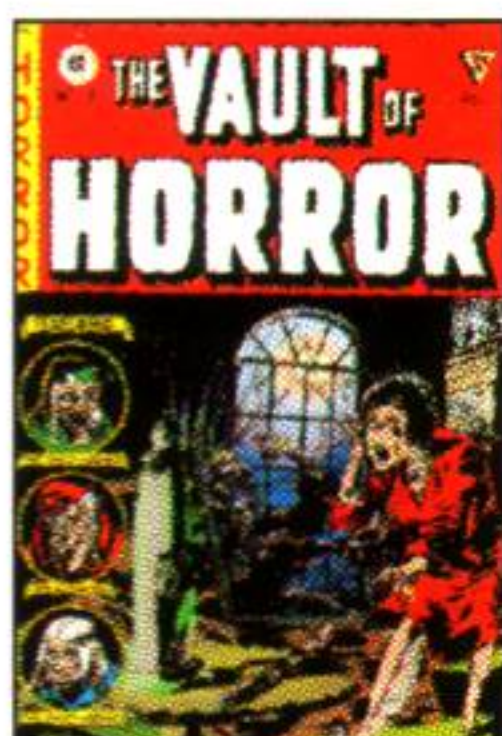
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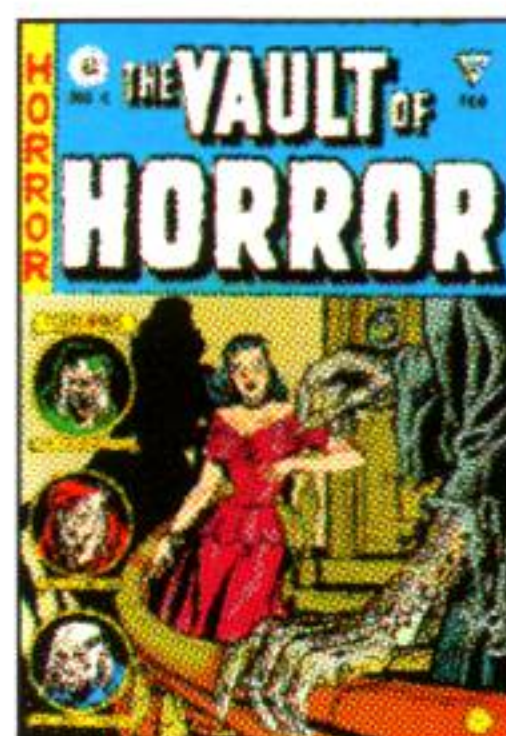
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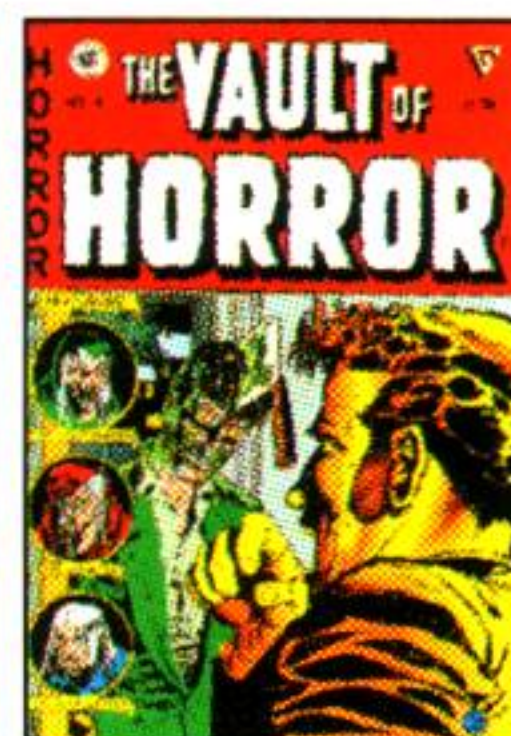
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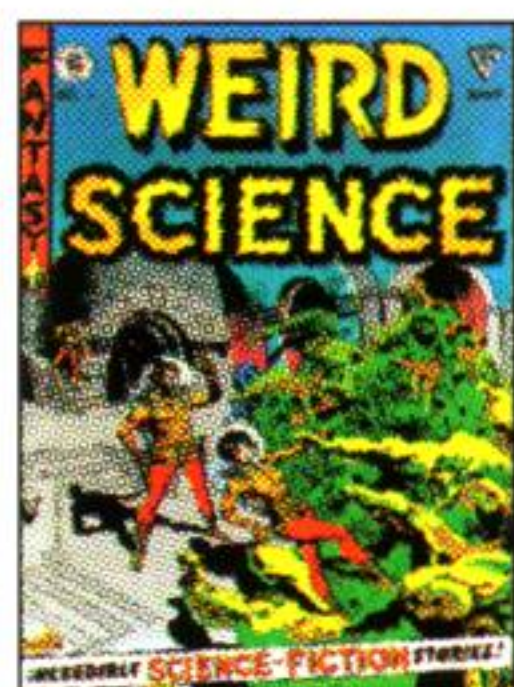
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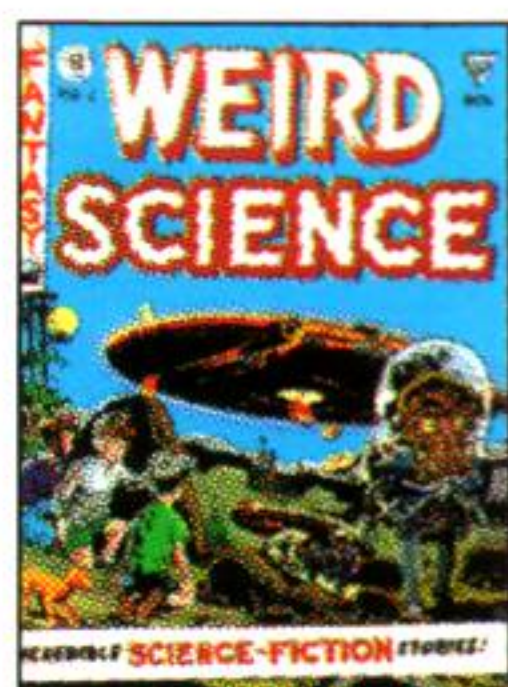
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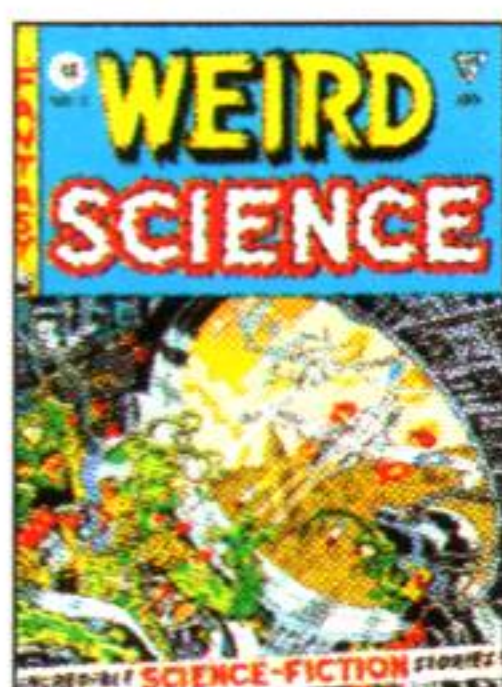
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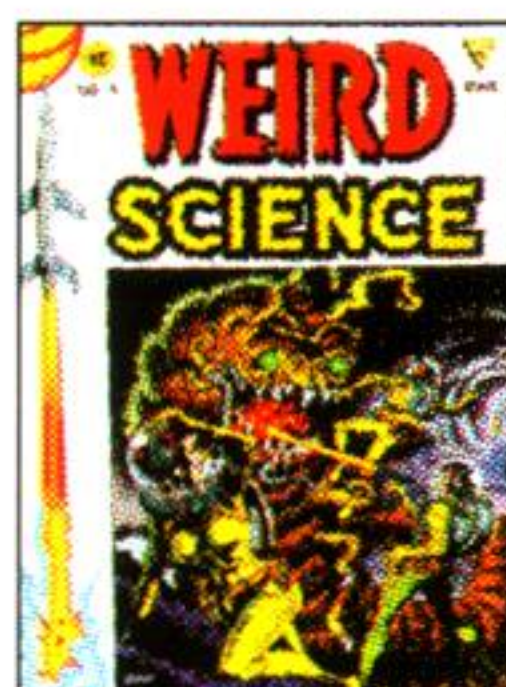
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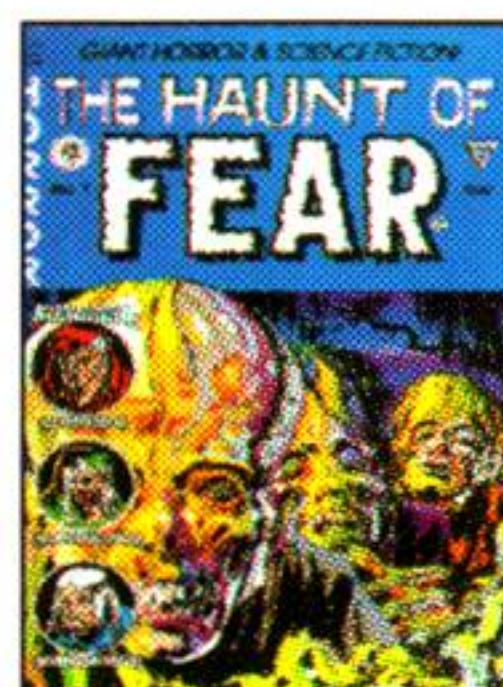
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GLAD WEIRD #3



GLAD WEIRD #4



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CRIME 18 (1951)

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CRIME 1 (1950)

#4: CRYPT 18 (1950)
CRIME 16 (1953)

#5: CRYPT 45 (1954)
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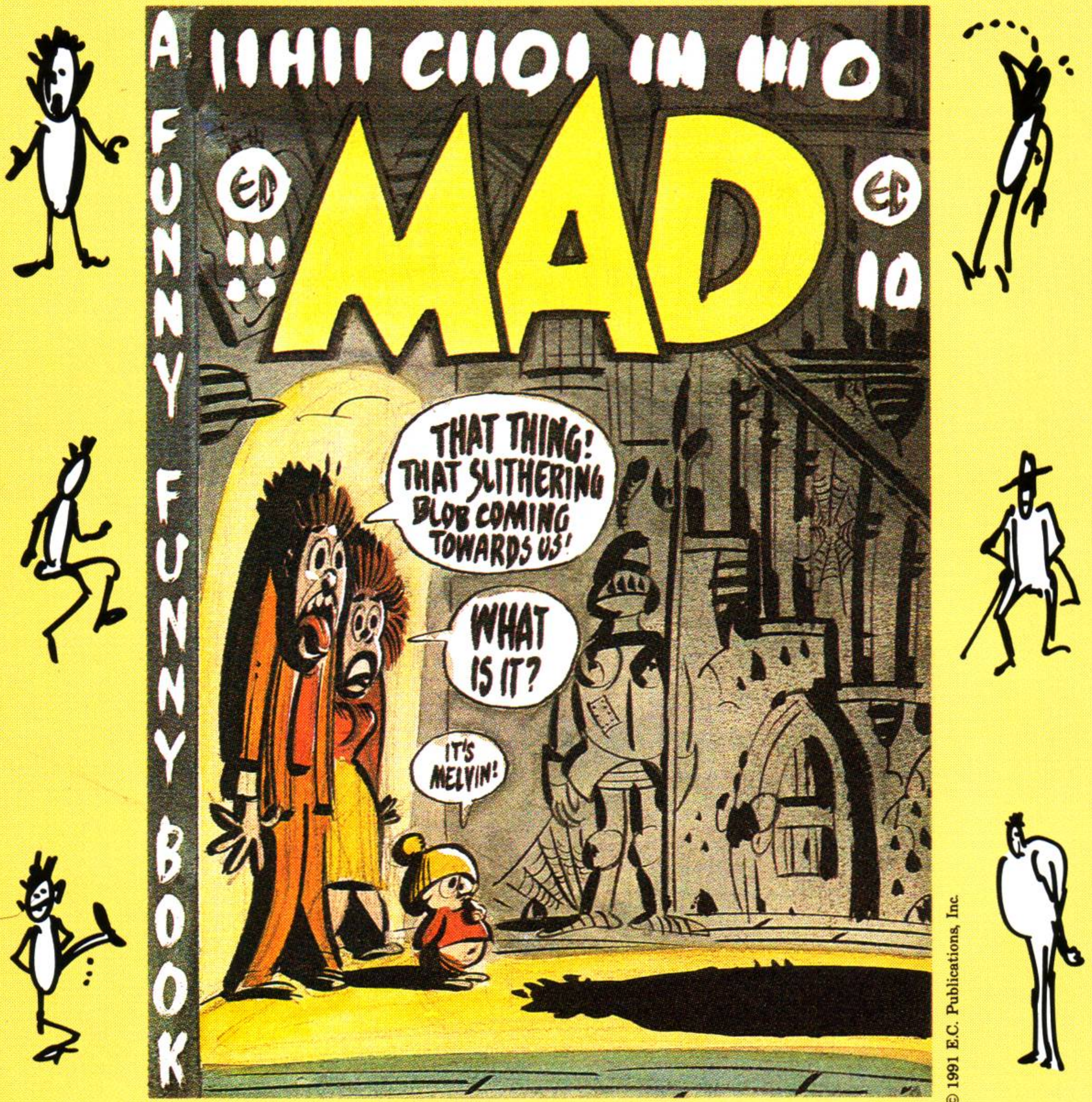
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THE OLD WITCH



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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! BACK AGAIN, EH? BET YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT THE OLD WITCH IS DOING HERE? YOU WERE EXPECTING THE DECREPIT CRYPT-KEEPER AND HIS PARTNER-IN-SLIME THE VAULT KEEPER, RIGHT?

THE SHOCKING TRUTH IS THAT THEY'RE BOTH HERE—VICTIMS OF CRYPT-FEVER! THEY'VE TOTALLY FREAKED OUT! TOO MUCH TIME SPENT IN THE CRYPT OF TERROR WATCHING YOU TOOMBI! WORST CASE I EVER SAW! THEY EVEN HALLUCINATED SEEING ME DRESSED IN A FRENCH MAID'S UNIFORM!*

NOT TO WORRY—I'M BREWING UP A CURE RIGHT NOW! "HAVE CAULDRON—WILL TRAVEL!" THAT'S MY MOTTO!

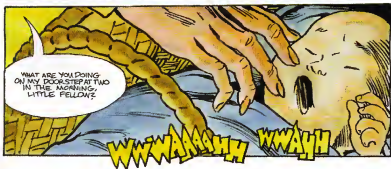
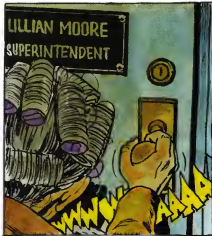
WHILE THIS SIMMERS, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT ANOTHER LADY WHO HAD TO TAKE CARE OF A LITTLE BOY, A REGULAR...

Little
DARLIN'

*YOU SAW IT TOO—
LAST ISSUE!







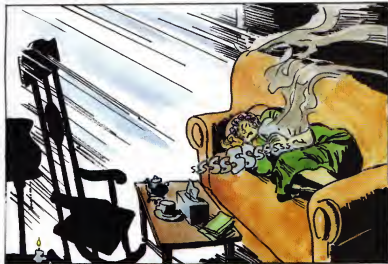


















I THOUGHT
YOU WOULD BE
GLAD I DID.

THEY WILL
TAKE HIM TO A
HOSPITAL.
CHECK HIM
OUT.



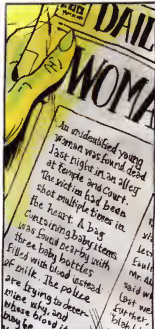
I'M SORRY.
I KNOW YOU
MEANT WELL.

EVER SINCE
ROY DIED I'VE
BEEN SO LONELY...



YOU'RE TOO
OLD TO BE TAKING
CARE OF A BABY
ANYWAY.







**KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK**



I'M MRS. WELLS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES. I UNDERSTAND SOMEONE LEFT A BABY ON YOUR DOORSTEP LAST NIGHT.



YES, THEY DID, BUT I CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM.



WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOUR
FINGERS?

OH, IT'S
NOTHING.
COME IN.



IT SURE
IS DARK
IN HERE.

THAT'S THE WAY
I LIKE IT!



MRS. GARCIA
SAID YOU NEVER HAD
CHILDREN. YOU DON'T
KNOW HOW TO TAKE
CARE OF A BABY,



BELIEVE ME,
MRS. WELFORD...

YOU'RE THE
ONE THAT DOESN'T
KNOW HOW TO
TAKE CARE OF HIM.



MRS. MOORE,
BRING ME THE
BABY THIS
INSTANT!

I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO TAKE
MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS.





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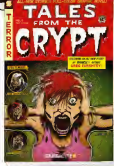
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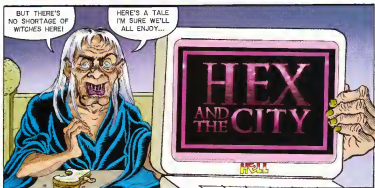
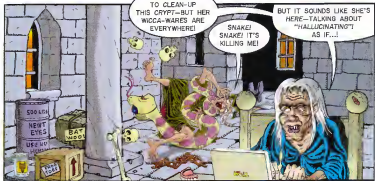


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PLEASE...
HELP ME...

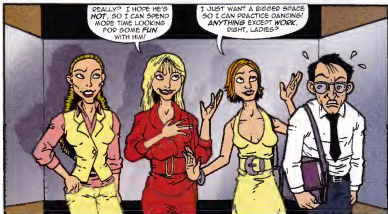
GROSS,
SOMEONE
SHOULD CALL THE
POLICE!

THE
FASHION
POLICE!

IGNORE
THEM! PEOPLE
ARE ONLY HOME-
LESS BECAUSE
THEY WANT TO BE!
JUST LIKE WE'RE
HAPPY AND PRETTY
BECAUSE THAT'S
WHAT WE
WANT!

HOWLSWORTH'S
SON TAKES OVER
TODAY! I CAN'T WAIT TO
ASK HIM FOR A PRIVATE
OFFICE SO I CAN SPEND
MORE TIME SEEKING
TRUE ROMANCE ON
THE WEB!





E-E-EXCUSE ME, BUT THERE I-I-IS MORE TO LIFE THAN LOOKING AND FEELING G-G-GOOD!





BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR
FINAL DECISION ABOUT
US, THERE'S SOMETHING
YOU MIGHT WANT TO
CONSIDER!

MAYBE WE DIDN'T WORK, BUT
THERE WAS ONE THING WE DID
FOR YOUR FATHER THAT MADE
US WORTH **EVERYTHING** HE
PAID US AND **MORE!**

YOU
SEE... WE'RE
WICCAN!

WE ARE?
OH, YEAH...
WE ARE!

WICCAN
LIKE YOU
WOULDN'T
BELIEVE!

AND WE PERFORMED
A RITUAL THAT MADE
YOUR FATHER A REAL
MAN!

UH... IT'S THE REASON
HE COULD WRAP
ANYONE HE WANTED
AROUND HIS
FINGER!

VERY
TIGHTLY!

YOU'D LIKE US
TO PERFORM OUR
RITUAL FOR YOU,
WOULDN'T
YOU?

UH... UH...
UH...

YES! YES!
A THOUSAND
TIMES YES!

>>> I'VE
BEEN SO LONELY!
SO AFRAID! AND MY
FATHER NEVER PAID
ANY ATTENTION
TO ME!

ALL HE EVER
GAVE ME WAS
THIS LOUSY BUSINESS!
AND I'M AFRAID OF
BUSINESSES,
TOO!



JUST TELL ME
WHAT I HAVE TO
DO AND I'LL DO
IT!



"FIRST, RENT A SECLUDED *SHACK* WHERE NO ONE CAN FIND YOU... UH... I MEAN *US*! THE RITUAL REQUIRES *POWER SEMS*, BUT A RICH GUY LIKE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO AFFORD THEM! NEXT..."

NICE TOUCH FINDING THESE OLD HALLOWEEN COSTUMES!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THIS RITUAL?

AH, I FOUND SOME *BOBIS* CEREMONY ONLINE CALLED *DRAWING DOWN THE MOON*. BUT AS LONG AS WE'RE DANCING AROUND, HE'LL DO WHATEVER WE SAY!

READY TO DRAW DOWN THE MOON, HAND-SOME?

OH, Y-Y-YEAH!

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE RITUAL, YOU'LL HAVE TO DRINK THIS AND SAY THE WORDS I TAUGHT YOU!

"GREAT GOD CERNUNNOS, RETURN TO EARTH AGAIN.
COME AT MY CALL AND SHOW THYSELF TO MEN,
SHEPHERD OF GOATS, UPON THE WILD HILLS WAY,
LEAD THY LOST FLOCK FROM DARKNESS UNTO DAY."

DRINK AND
BREAK!



CHUS-A-LUS!
CHUS-A-LUS!
CHUS-A-LUS!

>BULP-BULP-
BULP!<

I AM THE
POWER!

I AM
THE HORNED
GOD!



I AM...



...NOT FEELING
SO GOOD...



THUD!



THESE SUCKERS ARE
WORTH A MILLION AT
LEAST!

WE CAN START OUR OWN
BUSINESS WE WON'T HAVE
TO WORK FOR!



HE'S GETTING
UP? GET SOMETHING
TO WHACK HIM
WITH!

URGGG



AK-AK-AK!

EW! I HOPE
HE DOESN'T
PUKE!





WHO SUMMONS
THE HORNED GOD?

WHOSE WISHES
SHALL I FILL TO
BURSTING?



YOUR MIND AND BODY ARE NOW A
WRITHING WOUND THAT PULSES TO
THE COSMIC BEAT OF HUNGER'S
HEART!



BEHOLD!
YOU
ARE PART OF THE
DANCE OF THE
REAL!

AND YOU WHO WANTED
ONLY *PHYSICAL* PLEASURE,
WHERE SHALL WE
BEGIN?

YOUR FORM HAS A
BILLION NERVE ENDINGS FOR
FEELING PLEASURE, WHY NOT
SET THEM ALL *AF-FLAME* AT
ONCE?

HELP!

HELLPPP!

NO, I CAN'T
JUST LEAVE!

NOOOOOOOOOO!

NOT
WITHOUT THE
SEMS!

AND WHAT
WAS IT YOU
WANTED?

OH, NOTHING!
I'M GOOD!

ROMANCE!
THE SWOONING
MAJESTY THAT
MAKES THE WORLD
GO ROUND!

NO, REALLY,
THANKS, BUT...

I CAN GIVE
YOU MORE THAN
THE WORLD!

I CAN GIVE
YOU THE MOON
AND THE STARS!

"SHALL WE START
WITH THE MOON?"

IT'S NOT
POSSIBLE!

WITH LOVE
ALL THINGS ARE
POSSIBLE!

SHALL WE
KISS THE KISS OF
LOVE'S MADNESS?
SHALL WE KISS THE
KISS OF FOREVER?



BUT I
ALSO PROMISED
YOU THE *STARS*.
DIDN'T I?



THE COLD,
UNCARING
STARS?



SURROUNDED
BY AN INFINITE
BLACKNESS AS DARK
AS YOUR OWN BLACK
HEART!



YIEEEEE!

"AND FINALLY, YOU'LL
NEVER HAVE TO WORK
AGAIN."

CAN YOU
BELIEVE THREE JOBS
OPENED AT THE SAME
COMPANY AT THE SAME
TIME? AND WE GOT
THEM?

WE'LL BE
TOGETHER!

IT'S LIKE
I ALWAYS SAY:
LADIES, WISH HARD
ENOUGH AND YOU'LL
GET IT!



AND THE
HOMELESS ARE ONLY
THERE BECAUSE THAT'S
WHERE THEY WANT
TO GO!

PLEASE-
PLEASE-

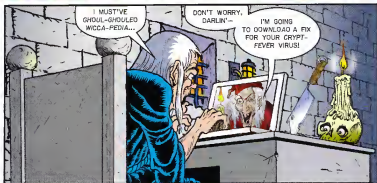
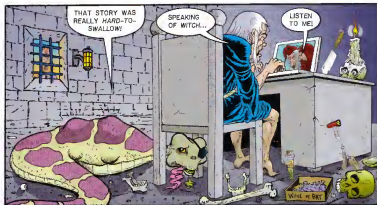




CAN'T WAIT
TO MEET THE
NEW OWNER!

I HEAR
HE'S TOTALLY
HOT!

PLEASE...



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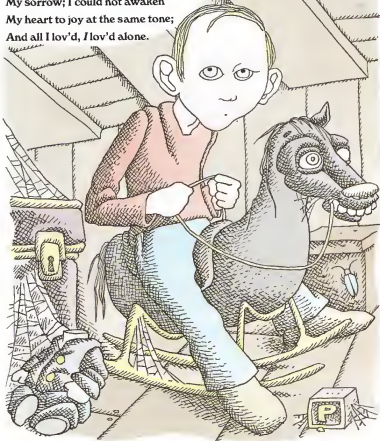
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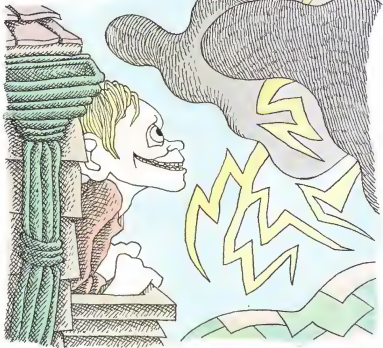
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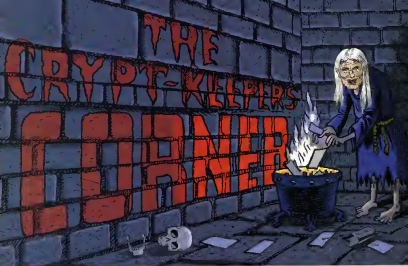
ALONE

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone;
And all I lov'd, I lov'd alone.



Then— in my childhood— in the dawn
Of a most stormy life— was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still:
From the torrent, or the fountain,
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.





The Old Witch is right! The Vault-Keeper and I have been spending too much time keeping Vaults and Crypts, and not enough time keeping SANE! Maybe it's from too much contact with our INSANE EC Fan-Addicts! Or watching too much You Toomb? Well, despite the great risk to my mental health, it's time once again to present your CRAZY COMMENTS and INSANE INSIGHTS!

Although, now that MY sanity is in question, how do I know that these are really YOUR letters? Or in the case of our ONLINE READER'S POLL, how do I know these are really the correct results? Well, outside of a quick crossover with the thrinks from PSYCHOANALYSIS, there's no way to test my state of mind at the moment, so let's just live DANGEROUSLY, and accept whatever comes our way!

According to our PUTRID POLL, "Brain Food" by Rob Vollmar and Tim Smith 3 won an overwhelming 61% of your votes, leaving "Murder M.A.I.D.," by Greg Farshtey and Mr. Exes, a paltry 39% of the vote. That's actually rather SHOCKING when you consider that Mr. Farshtey is the writer of the

BIONICLE graphic novels, the biggest-selling series from Papercutz! Perhaps we should've mentioned that Murder M.A.I.D. was actually the SEVENTH TOA? Or maybe I'm hallucinating again?

To vote for your fave FEAR-Y TALE from the issue you now grasp in your FETID FINGERS, just go to www.papercutz.com, find the TALES FROM THE CRYPT section, and click on this issue's cover to vote for your favorite story from this issue! Oh, and it really helps if you have one of those computer machines to get online.

And don't PANIC or get MAD if you somehow missed a TERROR-FILLED issue of the TALES FROM THE CRYPT comicbook, you can still find the same scary stories collected in equally scary, but albeit smaller-sized paperback and hardcover editions, available from booksellers everywhere! TALES FROM THE CRYPT Graphic Novel #6 "You Toomb" is on sale now, and features all your favorite BRAIN-EATING MONSTERS, VODOO HITMEN, KILLER ROBOTS, and BABY VAMPIRES! But if you're looking for FIENDISH FANS, here they are...

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I have a new story for you on TV. It's a nasty tale about a boy who likes to draw horror pictures and put them on the wall. One day his pictures begin to come alive. I call it "The Wall of Horror."

Love Your #1 Fan,
Tony Chavez

We've established that I may be even CRAZIER than usual, so keep that in your tiny minds when I UNOFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE that there's an all-new TV movie in the works based on TALES FROM THE CRYPT. It's being created especially for our younger fans, so you BLOOD-THIRSTY GEEZERS will just have to stick with the reruns of the HBO series on the CHILLER channel! But if enough of you BOILS and GHOULS watch the all-new TV movie, an all-new TV series starring me, the ORIGINAL Crypt-Keeper could be in your future!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I loooovve the new TALES FROM THE CRYPT series! Cool cover on issue #10. I also have a request. Can you reprint some of the old TALES FROM THE CRYPT stories in your new mag? And try to make your stories kind of like the old ones. Keep up with the stories of monsters! But please, no art like the art in issue #9, the story "Chicken Man." Again, try to make the stories more horror-science fiction, if you know what I mean. Anyway, keep up the gruesome work!

Your Fan,
Jared Hershman, Age 10

Well, Jared, if you want us to keep up the "gruesome work" then we gotta keep using James Romberger! We're sorry you weren't thrilled (and chilled) by his art on "Chicken Man" but so many others were - including fellow CRYPT-contributors John L. Lansdale and Rick "the Sicko" Parker!

Subject: TALES FROM THE CRYPT

This stuff is great. I remember reading reprints of the originals back in the '80's, so as a 35 year-old reader that came across this new series, I absolutely love it. I just love the tales and I can't get enough. I finish each book thirsting for more. I just read #1 and #2 and have read about your plans for CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED, which I think is great. Keep up the good work!

A fan,
Steven Ortiz

Speaking of ROTTING REPRINTS, Steven, in case you were UNAWARE, all the original issues of TALES FROM THE CRYPT are being collected in a series of great, big, full-color hardcover volumes by Gemstone Publishing. But there's a particular Jack Davis-drawn tale that we may be including in one of our upcoming Paperclutz collections. All we can say now is that it may be the most requested CRYPT tale of all (by me)! Stay tuned!

And what better way to stay tuned to the CRYPT OF TERROR than to subscribe?

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And if any of you are licensed psychiatrists, let me know if I'm NUTS or not!